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SOCCER

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WEEKLY

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GST INCLUSIVE

YOUNG ROOS LOOKING BRIGHT

By Peter Damalas

The Young Socceroos squad can take some positives from the four match tour of Europe in April Australia's Under-20s team lost its first two matches before ending the European experience on a high by defeating the reserve teams of French Ligue 1 sides Lens and Paris St. Germain.

For national youth coach Ange Postecoglou, these four matches provided the perfect opportunity to have a look at prospective players of the future, the young men who will compete for a place in the 2005 World Youth Championships in the Netherlands.

"The main idea was to give these guys an experience of playing abroad against different opposition and players within a camp situation. I have started identifying the players who will most likely figure next year," he said.

In what was the first step for the latest young brigade, the Young Socceroos lost 2-1 to French 4th Division team Armentieres in northern France with uncontracted midfielder Billy Celeski scoring the lone goal.

The squad them made the short trip across the border to Belgium, where they went down for the second time to an Association of Unemployed Professional Footballers team courtesy of a late goal.

But the third match procured a positive result, with the squad overcoming the always difficult integration phase and playing some attacking football. 17-year old South Melbourne player Kristian Sarkies (who was singled out by Postecoglou for playing four good games) opened the scoring, while Newcastle defender Keegan Wolfenden completed the 2-0 win over Lens.

The tour was wrapped up with another impressive win over PSG reserves in Paris- Celeski scored for the second time and Mark Bridge doubled the score before the French side responded to make the final score 2-1.

Postecoglou was pleased with the tour, which he sees as the first of a number of tours to be arranged.

"It was a challenge for the team. It was good to see them play under pressure and I thought the performances were good. "The standard of the teams we played was very high. They offered hard, physical encounters. France lead the way when it comes to youth development," he said.

At this stage, the strongest feature of the Young Socceroos is the defence, with a number of players who had established in the NSL in its last season.

Postecoglou said that the likes of Jacob Timpano (captain of the Joeys squad at the last Under-17s world championships), Adrian Leijer, Mark Milligan and Trent McClenahan (West Ham) adapted well to playing in an overseas camp, and that they would more than likely lead the team in the next two years. With over a year to go before the WYC, Postecoglou expects to have a better preparation than the 2003 tournament.

(Continue on Page 3)

Young Socceroos coach Ange Postecoglou was pleased with his team's recent showing in France.

KIWIS TARGET SOCCEROOS

The Socceroos will start their journey to the 2006 FIFA World Cup in Adelaide after the Oceania Football Confederation (OFC) and the Australian Soccer Association (ASA) jointly announced the dates and venues for Stage Two of the OFC World Cup qualifying series.

Old foes New Zealand will be the Socceroos first obstacle in their bid to make the 2006 World Cup in Germany.

Hindmarsh Stadium and Marden Sports Complex will play host to the six-nation tournament, which will feature Australia and New Zealand as seeded teams, while the other four countries will be determined from Stage One of qualifying which will take place from 10-19 May in the Solomon Islands and Samoa. American Samoa, Cook Islands, Fiji, New Caledonia, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tahiti, Tonga and Vanuatu are the teams competing for the right to progress to Stage Two in Adelaide.

(continued on page 3)

Urukalo Attacked In Africa

By John Economos. (EXCLUSIVE)

MICHAEL URUKALO, the Australian from Sydney, currently the coach of Nigerian champion Club side, ENYIMBA International F.C., was last week physically attacked in Dakar, Senegal where his squad was training the day prior to the second leg of a Cup match against Senegalise side Jaraaf F.C.

As Urukalo watched his squad warm-up for a traning session on the far side of the playing pitch, a gang of Senegalise thug supporters, slowly crept up behind the Australian coach and physically attacked Urukalo.

A most disturbed Urukalo stated to *ABSW*: "Despite losing 2-0 the next day, we still qualified for the next stage on a 3-2 aggregate. But believe me we had to endure unbelievable hostility and intimidation, unlike I've seen or esperienced anywhere in the world.

"The Senegalese Jaraaf FC side was an absolute disgrace to African Football.

"On the Friday, the day before our return away-match against Jaraaf, at our final training session at the National Stadium, I was physically attacked and assulted.

"As I was walking onto the training pitch to commence our session, some supporters of Jaraff FC, without any warning, suddenly set upon me.

"I was attacked and ended up with bruises on my face and around my head.

"I at least managed to leave two of them on the ground, one with a broken nose and a re-arranged face.

"My assistant coach came off much worse.

"All my players were warming up on the far side of the pitch.

"They soon noticed the violent attack and raced across the pitch to our aide.

"They were brilliant and they counter-attacked the mob, driving them off us.

"There was absolutely no security whatsoever," Urukalo stated.

(Continued Page 3)

Michael Urukalo: Attacked in Senegal.

SAINTS LOSE GRIP ON TITLE P19

Blacktown's Kain Rastall goes toe to toe with St George star Ralph Bove (right)

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BY DANIEL KUZIOW

Former South Melbourne defender Steve Laurie is back in Melbourne after successful trials in Scotland with Dundee United.

The out-of-contract South Melbourne stopper has been invited back to Tannadice for preseason training by United manager Ian McCall.

While at Tannadice, Laurie was also invited to train with Kilmarnock by boss Jim Jefferies, but turned the offer down as he is committed to winning a deal at United.

"It went very well," a delighted Laurie told tribalfootball.com. "It's a great set-up and the lads were brilliant to work with. "I did receive an offer to try my luck at Kilmarnock as well. But the gaffer at Dundee United, Ian McCall, is a good bloke and I am committed to doing my best in preseason to convince him to give me a contract."

Laurie has hinted he may play in the Victorian Premier League to stay fit before returning to Scotland for preseason at Tannadice.

"I need to keep my fitness ticking over, so it'd be good to play in the VPL in order to stay in shape. I'll be heading back to United for their preseason, but there's quite a gap, so it's important I stay in shape."

******

Young Olyroo gun Alex Brosque is in talks with Feyenoord and Westerlo expect to have first refusal on Brosque if he decides to sign with the Dutch club.

Westerlo manager Herman Wijnants confirmed that "it's highly likely" the Belgian club will have Brosque on-loan next season if he can strike an agreement with Feyenoord.

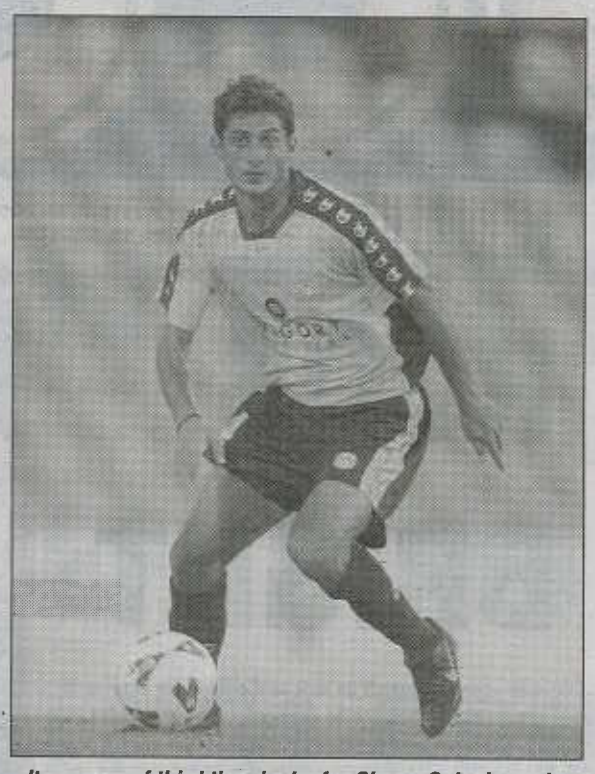
Brosque played for Westerlo reserves on Monday against Standard Liege.

******

Already relegated Serie A side Ancona have handed trials to out-of-contract Parramatta Power midfielder Simon Colosimo.

The Italian outfit are preparing for life back in Serie B and are running the rule over the Australia international, who has previous experience with Royal Antwerp and Manchester City.

"I have played previously in Europe, but I was not mature enough, so I failed," said Colosimo. "Today I am a complete player and deserve another chance."



Its a case of third time lucky for Simon Colosimo who is currently on trial with relegated Serie A side Ancona

Colosimo has starred for the Socceroos this past season which put him on the map once more with overseas clubs.

After having a fallout with former England gaffa Kevin Keegan at Manchester City, Colosimo would have learned his lesson now in not messing with any coaches at a club.

******

Former Sydney United defender Mark Rudan was again hailed as the main influence in Public Bank's 2-0 win over Perlis on the weekend.

Public Bank stay top of the Malaysian Super League competition, with Rudan now settling in, having made his debut last week.

The ex-Northern Spirit defender inspired Public Bank with a superb performance against Perlis, marshalling the team after they were reduced to 10-men on 24 minutes.

"Mark was sensational for us tonight," said coach Public Bank Elangowan. "He lifted all the players around him with his tackling and communication."

Meanwhile its believed that former Power stars Andre Gumprecht and Fernando Rech could be on the verge of also signing on with a club in the Malaysian Super League.

The stars could follow Ante Milicic's lead in Asia where the former Power striker has already banged in three goals.

******

Ajax last week offered against re-signing former Olyroo Jason Culina for the coming Dutch season.

The former Australia U23 international hasn't been called upon by Ajax trainer Ronald Koeman this season and has been told he is free to find a new club.

Culina has been playing with Ajax's reserve-team this season.

Its is believed that Culina could possibly explore either another club in Europe or even a trip back down-under in time for the new APL season next year could be on the cards for the ace midfielder.

******

Excelsior Mouscron have decided against offering Aussie defender Stephen Laybutt a new contract.

The big centre-half's current deal expires at the end of the season and Mouscron did have the option of renewing it a further 12 months. But Laybutt's asking price proved too rich for the club, which they confirmed on their official website over the weekend.

Aussie Laybutt was stunned at the decision, admitting: "I've just learned about it as I got to the stadium last (Saturday). I'm obviously very disappointed about this. I feel good at Mouscron and the spirit in the squad is excellent.

"As for my contract, it's true I've asked for more than my original deal. But I think I've proven myself over the season and deserve a better contract."

Laybutt is currently injured, but confident that he will find a new club, with Racing Genk already sniffing around.

"The good thing is that I am available on a Bosman. My aim now is to get fit and sort out my future as quickly as possible. "My agent (Eddie Krncevic) will meet with the president in the next week and we should have something settled on my future by then."

******

Bustling energetic midfielder Peter Zorbas is currently being scouted by various English 2nd Division clubs and an ambitious Greek First Division club it was reported last week.

The former Parramatta Power star who has made over 100 NSL appearances is keen on playing overseas for a few seasons but has also stated that he would like to be part of the new APL league as well.

Until then, Zorbas will be busily watching the Euro 2004 championships in Portugal as a reward for a hard season with the Power squad.

******

Ace Melbourne Knights midfielder Anthony Pelikan has agreed terms on a four-year deal with Croatian giants Dinamo Zagreb.

The Australia U23 international joins Dinamo on a free transfer, though the Knights will be entitled to 25 per cent of any sell-on fee.

Pelikan, who was also being linked with Sparta Prague, secured the deal only days after playing for Australia U23 against Greece earlier this month.

Pelikan, regarded by man as one of the finest youth stars to have come through the Australian ranks was on the verge of signing for Zagreb last season.

A last minute glitch though hammered the final signing of Pelikan to Dinamo but next season looks rather bright for the hopeful Olyroo star.

One achievement Pelikan hopes to do before his move to Croatia would be to cement a spot in Frank Farina's final Olympic Games squad in Athens.

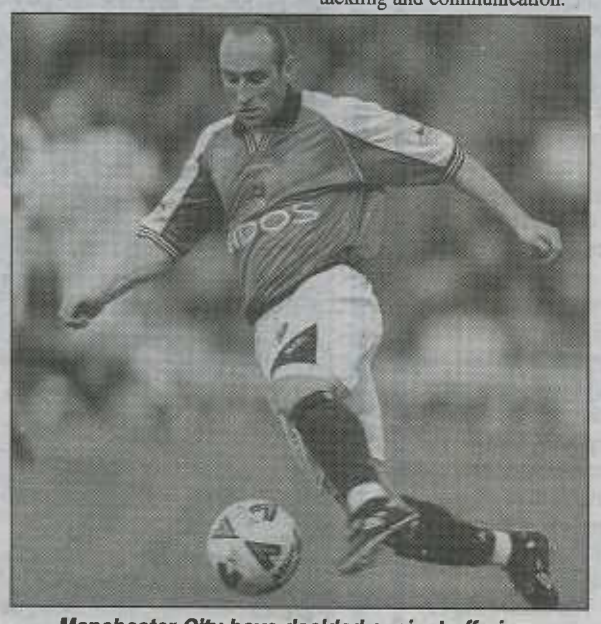
******

Manchester City will not be offering tough tackling midfielder Danny Tiatto a new contract at the end of the season.

The Australia international will be free to move on a Bosman with City's board deciding not to hand the player new terms.

Tiatto has struggled with injury this season, but is fit to take part in City's relegation run-in.

All of City's required players for next season have been given summer fitness programmes and its understood Tiatto is among those not to have been given a schedule.



Manchester City have decided against offering a contract to Aussie Danny Tiatto for next season

Promoted teams West Brom and Norwich City are both keen to speak with Tiatto's advisors, with the Aussie expected to continue his career in England next season.

This comes with the news that Tiatto last week was a proud father of a baby boy named Phoenix.

Tiatti will spend his off-season break with his family in Melbourne before jetting off to England in search of yet another contract with an English club.

******

Former South Melbourne attacker Andy Vlahos continues to impress the Cercle Brugge faithful after again putting in a top performances in their two-one home win against St Truiden.

The burly striker has been an instant hit with the Belgian side and through his performances could gain yet another contract for the new-year.

Currently trying his luck for a contract next season at Brugge is yet another South Melbourne star in Michael Panopoulos.

Still in Belgium, former Socceroo skipper Paul Okon is also doing his bit in gaining access to Frank Farina's Socceroo squad having played every KV Oostende in the Belgian 2nd Division.

There has been speculation that Okon is on the move away from Belgium next season but at the moment, former skipper is playing as many games as possible for a hopeful call-up by Farina in late May in the Roos two friendly matches against Turkey.

******

West Ham youth youngster Trent McClenahan has been in fine form of late for the West End club.

The former Parramatta Power youth player has been playing regularly for the West Ham side and through his credible achievements gained a call-up by Ange Postecoglou recently for an U20's camp in France.

It is believed that McClenahan could possibly gain yet another year on his contract next season.

Trent McClenahan is impressing the coaching staff at West Ham

WAITT NAMES NZ SQUAD

By Ben Coonan

New Zealand coach Mick Waitt has named his 23-man squad to participate in next months OFC Nations Cup tournament that doubles as second stage World Cup Qualifiers.

The All Whites will be at full strength for the five match series and will again be captained by US based defender Ryan Nelsen.

In what is a relatively inexperienced squad, only nine members have fronted more than ten times for the All Whites, with five players making their senior debut.

Included in the list of debutants is 18-year-old defender Steven Old, who captained the New Zealand Under 23 side in the recent Olympic Qualifiers.

Overall, there are eleven players who were involved in January's Qualifiers and seven survivors from the All Whites successful OFC Nations Cup campaign of 2002.

Notable absentees include stalwarts Chris Jackson, Mark Burton and Chris Zoricich as well as Belgian based striker Chris Bouckenooge.

Bradford goalkeeper Mark Paston is a sure starter between the posts for the All Whites after an impressive year with the newly relegated Division Two outfit.

The Kiwi's will be led at the back by Nelsen and locally based defender Gerard Davis, whom have amassed 60 international caps between them.

In midfield, the influence of MLS stars Simon Elliott and Duncan Oughton is sure to complement that of New Zealand's highest paid sportsman, Ivan Vicelich of Roda JC.

Chris Killen and Vaughan Coveny are tipped to start in the final third, with both enjoying solid hit outs with their respective clubs this season.

Goalkeepers
Glen MOSS - Sydney Olympic, Australia
Mark PASTON - Bradford City, England
Tamati WILLIAMS - University of Mt. Wellington, New Zealand

Defenders
Che BUNCE - Randers FC, Denmark
Gerard DAVIS - Western Suburbs, New Zealand
Tony LOCHHEAD - Santa Barbara University, United States
Ryan NELSEN - DC United, United States
Steven OLD - Manawatu AFC, New Zealand
Rupesh PUNA - Caversham AFC, New Zealand

Midfielders
Tim BROWN - Cincinnati University, United States
Raffaele DE GREGORIO - Western Suburbs, New Zealand
Simon ELLIOTT - Los Angeles Galaxy, United States
David MULLIGAN - Doncaster Rovers, England
Duncan OUGHTON - Columbus Crew, United States
Ivan VICELICH - Roda JC, Netherlands
Mike WILSON - Minnesota Thunder, United States

Strikers
Leo BERTOS - Rochdale AFC, England
Vaughan COVENY - South Melbourne, Australia
Noah HICKEY - Football Kingz, New Zealand
Neil JONES - Santa Barbara University, United States
Chris KILLEN - Oldham Athletic, England
Shane SMELTZ - Adelaide United, Australia

KIWIS TARGET ROOS

(Continued from Front)

The top two nations from the Adelaide tournament, which doubles as the 2004 Oceania Nations Cup, will playoff later in the year for a spot in the 2005 FIFA Confederations Cup and will also play each other again next year for the right to play the fifth best CONEMBOL (South America) nation for a berth at the World Cup finals.

"The Government is pleased that the Australian Soccer Association has chosen Hindmarsh stadium for this extremely important tournament and I am sure that all South Australians will enjoy this wonderful spectacle and support our Australian team." said Minister Michael Wright, South Australian Minister for Recreation and Sport.

"Hindmarsh Stadium is now operating as a world class venue and it is recognised that there is no better place in Australia to watch quality teams play than in a packed Hindmarsh Stadium."

The Socceroos last played in Adelaide in February 1998 when they were defeated by Japan 3-0.

"The people of South Australia showed great support for Adelaide United in the NSL this year and we are certain they will relish the opportunity to see the Socceroos in action," said Australian Soccer Association Chief Executive Officer John O'Neill.

"It's been six years since the Socceroos have played in Adelaide and no doubt the sports fans of South Australia will savor the opportunity to see their first steps on the journey to the World Cup."

Hindmarsh Stadium will host a double-header on the evenings of Saturday 29 May, Monday 31 May, Wednesday 2 June, Friday 4 June and Sunday 6 June.

Marden Sports Complex will host an afternoon match on Saturday 29 May, Monday 31 May, Wednesday 2 June, Friday 4 June and Sunday 6 June.

The Socceroos will prepare for the OFC Nations Cup tournament with a two-match series against 2002 FIFA World Cup semi finalist Turkey at Aussie Stadium in Sydney on Friday 21 May and at Telstra Dome in Melbourne on Monday 24 May.

OFC NATIONS CUP 29 May to 6 June 2004

ADELAIDE

SATURDAY 29 MAY 2004
Group 2 No 1 v Group 1 No 1 2.00pm Marden Sports Complex
Group 1 No 2 v Group 2 No 2 5.30pm Hindmarsh Stadium
Australia v New Zealand 8.00pm Hindmarsh Stadium

MONDAY 31 MAY 2004
New Zealand v Group 1 No 1 2.00pm Marden Sports Complex
Australia v Group 1 No 2 5.30pm Hindmarsh Stadium
Group 2 No 2 v Group 2 No 1 8.00pm Hindmarsh Stadium

WEDNESDAY 2 JUNE 2004
Australia v Group 2 No 2 2.00pm Marden Sports Complex
Group 1 No 2 v Group 1 No 1 5.30pm Hindmarsh Stadium
New Zealand v Group 2 No 1 8.00pm Hindmarsh Stadium

FRIDAY 4 JUNE 2004
New Zealand v Group 1 No 2 2.00pm Marden Sports Complex
Group 2 No 2 v Group 1 No 1 5.30pm Hindmarsh Stadium
Group 2 No 1 v Australia 8.00pm Hindmarsh Stadium

SUNDAY 6 JUNE 2004
Group 1 No 2 v Group 2 No 1 2.00pm Marden Sports Complex
Group 2 No 2 v New Zealand 5.30pm Hindmarsh Stadium
Group 1 No 1 v Australia Hindmarsh Stadium

OLYMPIC STILL ALIVE

An extraordinary General Meeting between all board members from former NSL club Sydney Olympic took place last Sunday afternoon with talks about the future of the club.

One issue that was discussed was its pledge to stay alive as football side in Australia.

The club members voted against being involved in the new APL next year but did state that they would like to be part of an 'Eastern Seaboard', style competition.

YOUNG ROOS LOOKING BRIGHT

(Continued from Front)

"Success in these tournaments comes down to preparation. We hope to get together for at least two more camps in the coming months, although nothing is set in stone.

"Without the national league the players will be idle and we need to fill this gap," he said.

Indeed, the lack of an elite competition may have a negative impact on both the Under-17s and Under-20s for the next major tournaments.

As it has been well documented in *ABSW*, most locally based players are currently in a bind as to how they pursue their playing careers, and making the right decision at this stage is absolutely crucial to their future in the game.

Australian soccer risks losing some of its top talents, and Ange Postecoglou recognises that the players he selects in the next two years may miss out on some valuable experiences.

"Players at this age need to be involved in good competition, and having no national competition makes this doubly hard. Some may not have that experience of playing competitively, and they may lose their fitness and touch and this means that they do not develop," he said.

He stated that the onus is on the players themselves to keep working on their game, whether it be in Australia or overseas.

"I would normally say to these players to stay in Australia, but the [state league] is not ideal as the standard is not great. There is a lot of responsibility on the players to look after themselves," he said.

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Urukalo Attacked In Africa

(Continued from front page)

Prior, and during the match, Urukalo's bench was pelted with rotten eggs and rocks.

In his team's dressing rooms, chicken heads were cut and left all over the floor with the blood smeared over all the walls.

Urukalo went on to add:" This was something that I have never experienced in my life as a coach throughout the world. And FIFA urges for 'Fair Play'?

"Football people back in Australia would find such violence and hostilities that my team and I were subjected to, very hard to believe.

"Australians have no idea of the extent to what teams and their supporters do in Africa to get a result.

"We back home are 'babies' in comparison to the rest of the goings on in certain parts of the Football World.

"This certainly has been another "football education" for me. Despite the gravity of it, it certainly has toughened me up as a coach on the international level.

However on a far more pleasant note, Urukalo's Nigerian Club side was recently voted as the Number One team on the 'Dark Continent' by the Confederation of African Football.

This honour was bestowed upon Urukalo's side for having won the ***African Champions' League,*** but much more importantly, winning the prestigious twin-titles of the ***African Super Cup*** as well as the ***Nigerian Super Cup.***

No other team has held the "Double African Title" as well as a domestic one, in the same year.

Urukalo stated to *ABSW*: "It's a fantastic achievement for my Club.

"I am very very proud to have contributed a large degree towards these achievements as the team-coach. It's also a good reflection for Australia as far as coaches go."

Urukalo is expected to returned to Australia next month for a short break.

MAISANO: MORTON STILL A TITLE OPTION

By Richard Kreider

Greenock Morton's Australian midfielder John Maisano believes his side remains in with a chance of securing the Scottish second division league title in spite of a second-half season slump which changed the club's standing from cosy leaders to shaky second in a matter of weeks.

A spate of injuries and form reversals struck the Greenock club at a time when they least needed it and now find themselves three points behind Airdrie United with just three games remaining after last weekend's results.

"Last Christmas we were twelve points clear and that was as a result of top performances from everyone in the side" said Maisano, exclusively to *ABSW*.

"But we also know these aren't five or six month seasons, they are double that and over 36 games. We admit we have had a form drop through injuries or players losing a bit of form. The winter is also a very difficult patch in the season where the conditions can level out certain games.

We have only lost top spot over the last couple of weeks and are four points adrift Airdrie and four clear from third placed Hamilton, so the title is definitely still there to be had," he said.

"We can't afford to worry about anyone else though, we just need to win our remaining games."

John himself recently fell victim to injury, having suffered ligament damage to his right ankle, but the talented midfielder believes he is now back to full fitness.

The three week layoff was in fact a five game absence since it came at a time when there were two catch-up games outstanding.

"That is fifteen points we missed out on at a crucial part of the season," said Maisano, whose middle-third brilliance hasn't gone unnoticed by his peers, since he was recently nominated with three others for the Scottish second division PFA Award.

He will be competing against the likes of leading netbusters Paul Tosh of Forfar, Gareth Hutchison (Berwick) and Morton team-mate Peter Weatherson.

But Maisano insists the title is his first priority.

"We have got Airdrie in the last game of the season and that could very well be the decider," he said.

"Airdrie, I believe, are undefeated in about 14 games and on around seven or eight wins straight. That's a great run," acknowledged Maisano.

The Greenock club celebrated its 130th birthday this year by taking delivery of a brand new state-of-the-art training facility in Bridge of Wier, which clearly indicates the long-term intentions of the clubs president Douglas Rae.

"It is a great facility," said Maisano. "It's about twenty minutes from the Cappielow Park ground, has a training pitch and a great clubhouse which has everything you could want. Kitchen, pool table, table-tennis and television etc."

"There are not too many of these kinds of facilities in Scotland, so we are extremely fortunate."

Meanwhile, John's brother continues to shine for the 'Ton' and would soon be knocking on the door for national selection.

"Marco is playing really well, having played in almost all of the games this season. He is certainly one of the reasons why the club has done so well," said John.

"Marco has in fact been a starting-eleven player for the last two seasons. It is only suspension that kept him out of the side."

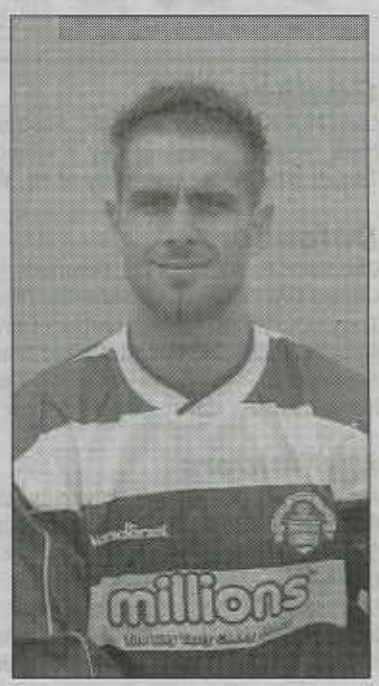
As for the restructure of Australian soccer; John Maisano is fully aware of the changes but he is in no hurry to return downunder, after having confessed he is happy where he is.

"We keep in touch with Australian soccer through our parents and the internet," said the former Marconi Stallions midfielder, who will be with the Scottish club two years this July.

"What I hear is, the next season isn't going to happen until 2005 and the players are going to be on around $70,000 a year," he said.

"It should keep the best players in the country but I'm not sure if it is going to work because there have been plenty of these sorts of ideas over the last decade."

"Still, we shall just have to wait and see."



The Maisano brothers: John (Left) & Marco (Right) have been rather pleased with their efforts in Scotland so far.

South Melbourne's Saviour?

Only a week after announcing that the club was under administration due to its financial difficulties it had with enormous debts, came the good news that South Melbourne's various troubles with monies owed have been wiped out.

Administrator CJL Partners disposed $1.12 million supposed debts from the Blues last week.

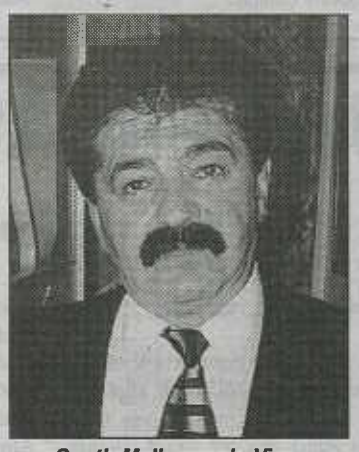
It was believed that CJL Partners sent out a letter to its creditors revealing that the club owed $2,629,072.72 but the clubs major creditor, club vice-President Panos Magaritis said he was not owed the $1,127,036.11 listed against him.

"It's a mistake, they owe me zero", Magaritis stated to '*The Herald Sun*'.

Parthenon Marble, a company owed by Panos stated that it owed South about $7000.

"I have probably given the club more than half a million. That comes from my company being a shirt sponsor and I think we still the owe the club $7000 of the last instalment of the sponsorship", Magaritis stated to '*The Herald Sun*'.

The issue of $1.4 million owing from the club was to be advised by Richard Cauchi of CJL Partners amongst the 118 creditors that had 25 senior players names on the list also.



South Melbourne's Vice-President Panos Magaritis has spilled a lot of money into the Blues this season.

Its known that South Melbourne players from this season have been paid up until March 20 of this year even though their contracts had scheduled to finish June 30.

Due to the breaking of their contracts in terms of not being paid up until their final date, most players have moved onto various Victorian Premier League clubs via a free transfer.

In another bid to save the Blues from extinction, the 'Friends of South' group raised $21,000 at a function a few weeks ago held at Konstantin's restaurant in Albert Park.

"All our money is going to separate trust. At a given point, we'll meet with the administrator to offer or funds in return for regaining control of the club", stated Lazarus Papasavas of 'Friends of South' to '*The Herald Sun*'.

Glory urges ASA for "target date"

Perth Glory owner Nick Tana is urging the Australian Soccer Association to release a timetable for the lead-up to the commencement of the new national league competition.

ASA have released a timetable for prospective consortiums to make their interest known, but Tana is keen to see details on when the new league will actually kickoff.

"We need a timetable," he told the West Australian.

"We have to address our staff and sponsors and we don't have a target date. This new statement does not advance us very far."

CAHILL MAKES TEAM OF THE YEAR

It does not get better than this: Aussie Tim Cahill was selected in the PFA Nationwide Division One Team of the Year.

Socceroo Tim Cahill extraordinary season with Millwall continued yesterday when he was named in the PFA Nationwide Division One Team of the Year.

Cahill, who was instrumental in leading Millwall to the FA Cup Final, last month made his Socceroo debut against South Africa and has helped Millwall onto the cusp of qualification for the promotion play-offs.

Millwall, with Cahill absent through suspension, lost on the weekend and have now slipped off the pace with their focus firmly on their historic clash with Manchester United in a month's time.

Cahill has scored 12 goals this season from midfield and his exploits over the last few seasons, but more so this season, have attracted the interest of several Premier League clubs.

Its been no secret that this year Cahill has been the pick of the bunch for the Aussies playing abroad and only time will tell until a major Premier League snaps up the former Sydney-born star.

Its been rumoured that Scottish giants Rangers and English glamour side Manchester United have shown interest in Tim along with a shortlist of other English Premier League clubs.

Aston Villa were on their ways in securing Cahill during the last transfer campaign however failed to sign up the star due to some minor hiccups towards the end.

Cahill though has been quite happy at the Blues and has stated that his game has bettered through the expert tutelage of former English international Dennis Wise.

Meanwhile Millwall are moving to build a network of junior Academies around the world - including Australia. Following on from the success they've had with Australian players, including Tim Cahill, Kevin Muscat, Lucas Neill and Jason van Blerk, Millwall are exploring the option of opening an Academy Down Under.

They already have an Academy in Canada and have earmarked former star striker Richard Sadlier to join the coaching staff.

A number of English clubs have taken a liking towards the Australian youth system and many have pondered their paths in wanting to link up down-under.

The trend of Australians playing their trade in England has again increased and it will only grow further with link-ups from various English clubs such as Millwall.

Johnny Warren Charity Golf Day

Calling all sports-minded people living in NSW to join former Australian World Cup captain Johnny Warren for a glorious Charity Golf Day, already organised for Thursday 27th May 2004 and to be played at Jamberoo, just 9 kilometres West of the Coastal township of Kiama.

You do not have to be a 'Slamming Sammy Snead', Jack Nicklaus or even a Tiger Woods.

Just grab your clubs and head down to glorious Jamberoo for a fantastic fun day with fellow sports personalities.

Mr Ross Warren, licensee of the historic local Jamberoo Pub, together with a syndication of Sponsors, have banded together to stage a 'Charity Golf Day' to be played on the local lush links of picturesque Jamberoo.

For an all inclusive package donation of $50:00, each player receives his Golf fees, lunch plus all drinks.

All proceeds raised will go towards the 'Sydney National Cancer Foundation'.

Already almost 100 sportsmen have signed up for this fun-filled day.

(l to r) Three of Australia's five all-time Soccer greats, former Australian World Cup legends, Ray Baartz, Johnny Watkiss and Johnny Warren.

Join former Australian World Cup Captain Johnny Warren with many other former and current Internationals for a round of Golf on the lush links of Jamberoo Golf Club.

Many former internationals will be attended this marvellous and nostalgic day including former internationals Johnny Watkiss, Ray Baartz, Dougie Utjesenovic, Georgie Harris and Jimmy Fraser.

Form a team of four, fill out the form below and fax to the address shown.

Don't miss it. Be There.

Fax your Entries today.

Full details left. Single players are also most welcomed. Tee-off has been set down for 10am sharp. Plenty of free parking available.

Don't be late.

Charity Golf Day with Johnny Warren

PLEASE FORWARD TO R.V. WARREN
JAMBEROO PUB,
12 ALLOWRIE STREET,
JAMBEROO ... 2533 OR
PHONE 42-360270
Email: warroo@speedlink.com
NO LATER THAN 20-5-04

ENTRY FORM:

Player No.1 ..... Handicap .....
Player No.2 ..... Handicap .....
Player No.3 ..... Handicap .....
Player No.4 ..... Handicap .....

NAME OF TEAM .....

CAPTAIN .....

.....

PLEASE ENCLOSE PAYMENT — CHEQUE — MONEY ORDER OR BANKCARD — DONATION $50.00 P.P.

CREDIT CARD TYPE .....
NUMBER .....
EXP. DATE .....
NAME ON CARD .....

Jamberoo Pub & Jamberoo Golf Club

Invite you to a

Charity Golf Day with Johnny Warren

at

Jamberoo Golf Club Thursday 27th May

Hit-Off 10am

Proceeds to Sydney National Cancer Foundation for Cancer Research

- 4 Ball Ambrose Teams — shotgun start
- AGU & LGU Handicaps — otherwise men 18 ladies 36 max
- 1st prize **Best net score (handicap)
  ** Best scratch score
- Nearest the pins • Best second shot on par 4 • Novelties & prizes galore

Donation $50.00 includes round of Golf, Lunch & Drinks Bookings:
Ross Warren (02) 423 60 270 — Home 02 423 60 119
Vehicle parking at Pub or Golf Course
Please meet at Golf Club entrance (opposite P.O.) @ 10am

Sponsors
Carlton United Breweries — Tooheys — Cola Cola — Jamberoo Golf Club — Jamberoo Pub — Saleyard Motel

Olyroos defeated by Tunisians

The Australian Under-23s (Olympic team) suffered a 1-0 defeat against Tunisia in their match played in Monastir, Tunisia played last Wednesday evening.

Despite dominating play and having the majority of scoring chances, the Australians were unable to convert in front of goal and were unable to equalise after the home side scored after 13 minutes.

The goal coming after an Australian corner was cleared and with the Tunisians breaking quickly upfield, a long diagonal ball was played into the penalty area appeared to have been intercepted by Gareth Edds.

Edds' header however back to goalkeeper Brad Jones was intercepted allowing the Tunisians to score with ease past the exposed Jones.

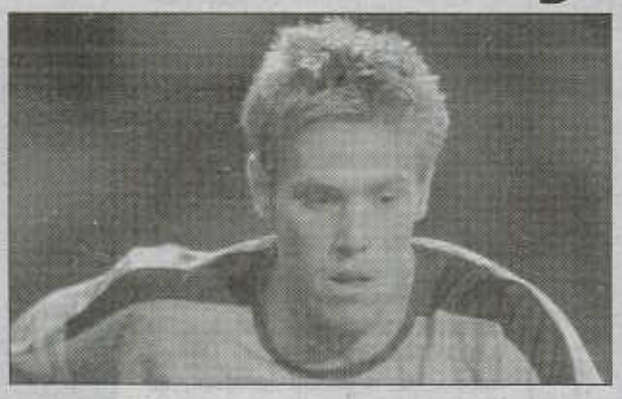
Aside from the goal Australia dominated possession in the first half and Patrick Kisnorbo headed narrowly over the crossbar in the 37th minute. The best chance for Australia came late in the half when Alex Brosque dispossessed a defender, dribbled past another and slotted the ball through for Luke Wilkshire whose shot was blocked inside the penalty area.

Australia won a half a dozen corners in the half with Brad Jones a virtual spectator.

The second 2nd half was much like the first with Australia dominating but with limited chances to score.

A typically mazy run from Nick Carle saw the ball layed off to Wilkshire whose shot was deflected just wide of goal. In the 70th minute a free-kick was played into the box by Wilkshire with Dylan Macallister's angled shot flashing narrowly wide.

The loss is the first for the Australians in nine games since a defeat against Turkey in Istanbul last September. The Tunisian side qualified for the 2004 Olympic Games last month after topping their group ahead of African heavyweights Senegal, Nigeria and Egypt.



Gareth Edd's mistake cost the Olyroos the only goal of the match against Tunisia last week.

The senior team recently won the 2004 African Cup of Nations when, as the host nation, they defeated Morocco 2-1 in the final.

Australian Under 23 coach Frank Farina, while obviously disappointed to lose against Tunisia, believes the match was an invaluable exercise as preparations continue for the 2004 Athens Olympic Games.

"I got a lot out the game to be totally honest," said Farina from Tunis.

"I said to the players prior to the match, opportunities for some of them will be few and far between, so they have to take them. These games, we are either putting lines through peopleâs names or putting it under them."

With Tunisia having also qualified for the Olympics through what was the toughest African qualifying group, Farina said the game was a good indicator of how the team is progressing.

"Tunisia is a very handy side, so it was a good indicator as to where we are at. I'm pretty confident with where we are at the moment, although I think there is a lot of improvement to come.

"Hopefully by the time August comes around we will be ready both mentally and physically."

Several players put there hands up for a place in the final 18 squad that will be chosen by Farina for the Olympics, with the Socceroo coach saying while there were no real standouts, Scottish-based defenders Adrian Madaschi and Patrick Kisnorbo were very solid, while captain Luke Wilkshire was another singled out by Farina for a solid performance, despite playing in a slightly different role in this game.

Farina also confirmed they are in discussions with a number of countries to play games, while a squad of 20 home-based players will go immediately into camp at the Australian Institute of Sport for two weeks to keep fitness levels up.

The men's football tournament at the 2004 Athens Olympic Games will be held between 11 August and 28 August 2004, with the group draw for the tournament due to be staged on 9 June 2004.

MATCH STATISTICS:-

Australian line-up: Jones, North, Kisnorbo, Madaschi, Cansdell-Sherriff, Elrich (Dilevski 70'), Valeri (Agius 84'), Edds (Carle 46'), Brosque (Griffiths 70'), Macallister, Wilkshire

WOLLONGONG NEWS

By Otto Bader

Illawarra Sons Shine

Two more local soccer youngsters are travelling this week in a bid to gain a lucrative overseas deal with a respective European club.

Wolves stars Jacob Timpano and keeper Justin Pasfield are on their ways to Italy and Belgium.

Timpano, who played a handful of games for the Wolves first team last year, recently returned from an U20's Young Socceroos camp in France.

It is believed that Jacob will be on trial at Italian Serie A side Empoli in their Primavera squad.

There seems to be some kind of Australian link with that club as there are three boys currently on the books at Empoli.

Nick Stavroulakis, Frank Lagana and Dez Giraldi (former Wolves player) are all playing for the Italian club.

Meanwhile two additional Wolves youth graders keeper Tom Arcaba (19) and Matthew Gordon (19) stayed behind in France after being part of the team which played in the recent FIFA youth tournament in Saint Joseph – Saint Etienne.

Both received the chance to trial with professional football club Metz, France after coach Eddie Tesoro made the contact with the football club's Italian Director of coaching Frances De Taddio.

The boys will be training 22 hours per week, 9 AM to 11 AM, lunch and rest and then 4 PM to 6 PM, at the Centre of De'Formation. A distinction is made for kids from 10 years skill training at a Centre of Formation and players from 16 years on to fine-tune them for professional football – they either make it of fall by the way-side, cruel as it may sound.

Tom and Matthew will live at the club's dormitory for two weeks, eat, sleep and live soccer, next to the Metz stadium.

Coach Eddie Tesoro accompanied the two players initially to Metz and returned to Australia but will check on progress. He intends to go back to Metz next month to study modern football coaching systems.

Only soccer does open the door to international football overseas for ambitious young players however very few reach any dizzy heights and or golden wealth.

Premier League Action

Port Kembla is still in front after 7 rounds, 2 points ahead of Picton Rangers on 16 points, followed by Cringila lions and Albion Park WE both on 15 points, Wollongong Olympic 11, Coniston Lions, Tarrawanna and Dapto all on 10, Bulli on 9, Warilla Wanderers on 8, Balgownie Rangers on 7, Kemblawarra on 5, Kiama on 4 and West Illawarra on 1 point. The standings could change quickly with another 19 rounds to go, a win or loss sees teams lift or drop in one round.

Round 9 on the weekend 8/5/04 brings together Wollongong Olympic v Port Kembla at South Brandon Park, a real test for Olympic's rookie coach Gary Hatton against hot favourite Port.

Albion Park WE v Bulli at Terry Reserve, the host expected to catch the points.

Kiama v West Illawarra at Kiama, a test of survival for both not travelling too well, the home side looking for a win.

Cringila Lions v Balgownie Rangers at Crehan Park a must win for the third placed home side. Kemblawarra v Picton Rangers at Butler Memorial Park could be tough for the host against second placed Picton who hope to succeed.

Coniston Lions v Dapto at J.J. Kelly Park a close encounter between two well balanced sides. Warilla Wanderers v Tarrawanna at King Mickey Park must see the home side to take the points if they are going to survive and they can do it with the talent available and recent good form.

VICTORIAN PREMIER LEAGUE 2003-04

	P	W	D	L	F	A	PT
1.Bulleen Zebras SC	11	7	2	2	18	10	23
2.Frankston Pines SC	11	7	1	3	13	6	22
3.Green Gully Cavaliers SC	11	6	3	2	18	11	21
4.St Albans Saints SC	11	6	2	3	16	10	20
5.Oakleigh Cannons SC	11	6	2	3	15	10	20
6.Preston Lions SC	11	6	2	3	11	8	20
7.Altona Magic SC	11	6	2	3	15	14	20
8.Essendon Royals SC	10	3	3	4	10	10	12
9.Whittlesea Stallions SC	10	2	3	5	19	17	9
10.Fawkner Blues SC	11	2	2	7	11	16	8
11.Knox City SC	11	1	1	9	8	24	4
12.Bentleigh Greens SC	11	1	1	9	5	23	4

Round 10 Results

Oakleigh Cannons .2 — Fawkner Blues 1
(Juan Nilo, Nick Marinos) — *(Henry Fa'Arodo)*

Round 11

Sat, 1 May, 3:00PM

Knox City SC .....1 — Green Gully Cav SC .4
(Andrew Asimakidis) — *(Andy Vargas, Anthony Magnacca, Nick Tsaltas 2)*

Sat, 1 May, 5:30PM

Altona Magic SC ..1 — Bulleen Zebras SC ...1
(Koce Delev) — *(Josip Kozic)*

Sun, 2 May, 3:00PM

Fawkner Blues SC .3 — Bentleigh Greens SC .0
(Vince Lia, Tony Sterjovski, Henry Fa'Arodo)

Frankston Pines SC 0 — Oakleigh Cannons SC 1
(Juan Nilo)

St Albans Saints SC 1 — Preston Lions SC 0
(Ante Deak)

Vince Lia scored on his debut for the Fawkner Blues

SOCCERWOMAN

BY JANENE MAR

LAST CHANCE TO PUSH FOR MATILDAS OLYMPIC SELECTION

Twenty-eight players were named last Tuesday by National Coach Adrian Santrac for the current AIS/National Squad Training Camp, the very last opportunity to push for Olympic Games selection.

The camp commenced on Saturday in Canberra at the Australian Institute of Sport (1-10 May), before moving to the warmer climate of Queensland's Gold Coast, 10-18 May.

The pressure is now on for these National Squad members, with the 18 June deadline for Olympic selection nominations fast approaching. The Australian Olympic Committee will then name the 18-member team plus four 'alternates' for Athens 2004.

Seventeen of the recent Australia Cup/Oceania Olympic Qualifiers team are included in the Squad, including all six who made their Matildas debut – Leah Blayney, Lisa De Vanna, Kate Gill, Lana Harch, Selin Kuralay, and Sarah Walsh. Blayney and Kuralay are also amongst a trio of Young Matildas selected, along with Kylie Ledbrook, who impressed during last week's Oceania U19 Qualifying Tournament in Papua New Guinea.

Five of the squad – Cheryl Salisbury, Sacha Wainwright, Heather Garriock, Thea Slatyer, and Olivia Hohnke – are on their way back from long-term injury and are hoping to restore their claims for Olympic selection. In all, there are sixteen from last September's FIFA Women's World Cup team.

Six players – Salisbury, Wainwright, Dianne Alagich, Bryony Duus, Garriock, and Kelly Golebiowski - are aiming for their second Olympic Team selection, having competed at Sydney 2000. Also, Danielle Small and Amy Taylor were 'alternates' on that occasion.

Forward Michelle Carney and goalkeeper Luisa Marzotto are both former youth internationals and, along with Ledbrook, are hoping for their first ever senior national team selection.

In addition, Young Matildas midfielder Sally Shipard, age 16, has been invited to attend the week-long AIS component of the training camp, in recognition of her fantastic potential as a future Matilda.

Santrac was quick to stress the enormity of this coming camp and its bearing on Olympic selections. "With the Olympics obviously drawing very close now, we need to look at finalising our Olympic squad. This is the last opportunity for players to come into the camp environment, and through performances on and off park, leave a mark showing they are worthy of selection. The final squad will come from these 28, so this is a really very significant camp and the importance of players performing in it can't be understated."

"Arriving at this 28 has been very difficult," added Santrac. "Physiological testing results have played a factor in determining who was going to come in, and recommendations from the NTC coaches have obviously been a major consideration, as were past performances at previous AIS/national team camps, international tournaments – major or friendlies. So we've been looking at this group of players for some time."

"Included are three from the U19s qualifiers just completed - they've shown through their performances that they're worthy of selection as well. The group is extremely competitive. It's been very difficult to cut down to 28 from the original number that we had, and I suspect will be far more difficult to cut to the final 18, and that's a fantastic position to be in."

NATIONAL SQUAD – AIS/NATIONAL SQUAD TRAINING CAMP, 1-18 MAY 2004:

Players (28) :	Current Program	Hometown	Pos	DOB	Caps
Dianne ALAGICH	AIS / SASI	Adelaide	D	12/05/79	47
Melissa BARBIERI	AIS / VIS	Melbourne	GK	20/01/80	15
Leah BLAYNEY	AIS / NSWIS	Blue Mountains	M	04/07/86	4
Michelle CARNEY	NSWIS	Sydney	F	30/12/81	-
Rhian DAVIES	AIS / ACTAS	Sydney	D	05/01/81	30
Lisa DE VANNA	AIS / WA	Perth	F	14/11/84	3
Bryony DUUS	AIS / QAS	Brisbane	M	07/10/77	46
Gill FOSTER	AIS / ACTAS	Sydney	M	28/08/76	29
Heather GARRIOCK	QAS	Sydney	M	21/12/82	45
Kate GILL	AIS/NSWIS (Northern)	Newcastle	F	10/12/84	4
Kelly GOLEBIOWSKI	NSWIS	Sydney	F	26/07/81	62
Pam GRANT	AIS / QAS	Rockhampton	D	15/11/82	12
Lana HARCH	AIS / QAS	Toowoomba	M	23/11/84	2
Olivia HOHNKE	QAS	Toowoomba	M	08/08/78	8
Tal KARP	AIS / ACTAS	Perth	M	30/12/81	23
Cassandra KELL	AIS / NSWIS	Central Coast	GK	08/08/80	15
Selin KURALAY	QAS	Melbourne	F	25/01/85	4
Kylie LEDBROOK	NSWIS	Sydney	M	20/03/86	-
April MANN	AIS / QAS	Brisbane	F	21/04/78	28
Luisa MARZOTTO	SASI	Canberra	GK	17/03/84	-
Joanne PETERS	AIS/NSWIS (Northern)	Leeton	M	11/03/79	60
Karla REUTER	AIS / QAS	Toowoomba	D	14/06/84	9
Cheryl SALISBURY	NSWIS (Northern)	Newcastle	D	08/03/74	93
Thea SLATYER	NSWIS	Sydney	D	02/02/83	12
Danielle SMALL	NSWIS	Newcastle	M	07/02/79	25
Amy TAYLOR	AIS / ACTAS	Canberra	D	11/06/79	24
Sacha WAINWRIGHT	ACTAS	Canberra	D	06/02/72	57
Sarah WALSH	AIS / QAS	Sydney	F	11/01/83	3

CHINA AND JAPAN QUALIFY FOR OLYMPICS

China and Japan emerged the teams celebrating a berth to the Athens 2004 Olympic Games with a successful campaign in the AFC (Asian) Women's Olympic Qualifiers held in Japan 18-26 April.

The ten-team Olympics lineup is now complete, the two Asian teams to join Australia, Germany, Sweden, Brazil, USA, Mexico, Nigeria, and hosts Greece come August.

With two Olympic spots up for grabs from Asia, it was the semifinals which were the crucial fixtures of the eleven-nation qualifiers. China came out single-goal victors over South Korea; whilst hosts Japan upset clear favourites North Korea by a resounding 3-0 scoreline.

In addition to missing out on the Olympics, North Korea also surrendered their first Asian title since 2001. With China's 1-0 victory over Japan in the final, the Chinese are now able to celebrate reclaiming that number one status, which they had previously held for so many years.

OLYMPIC GAMES ATHENS 2004 WOMEN'S FOOTBALL

Team	*Qualified as -*	*Previous Olympics*
Australia	Oceania champions	Sydney 2000 – 7th
Brazil	Best South American team	
		Atlanta 1996 – 4th
		Sydney 2000 – 4th
China	Asian champions	Atlanta 1996 – Silver Medal
		Sydney 2000 – 5th
Germany	Top European team at 2003	
	World Cup	Atlanta 1996 – 5th
		Sydney 2000 –
		Bronze Medal
Greece	Host Nation	-
Japan	Asian runners-up	Atlanta 1996 – 7th
Mexico	CONCACAF runners-up	-
Nigeria	African champions	Sydney 2000 – 8th
Sweden	Second top European team at 2003 World Cup	
		Atlanta 1996 – 6th
Sydney 2000 – 6th		
USA	CONCACAF champions	
		Atlanta 1996 – Gold Medal
		Sydney 2000 – SilverMedal

from the

dressing sheds

by Mark Stavroulakis

WHERE'S THE MEDIA COVERAGE?

I know its early days yet for next season's reformed APL however we have yet to see such promotion in hyping the highly anticipated start to a new look league.

Its sad to note that there is basically nothing revolving in terms of national news in the soccer topic in any of the leading media outlets whether it be on radio or in the newspapers.

One thing that needs to be done is advertising that a new league is on the loose for next year.

The ASA needs to assure the current fans that there will be something to look forward to come July/August next year.

It's no use keeping things a secret or in that matter not doing anything till the last minute in pumping up this sport.

The battle for becoming one of the best sports in Australia starts now, and again, we have failed to start off on the right foot.

Time will tell until Frank Lowy and his board prove to be the saviours of the Australian game however from current issues nothing looks for certain that this will happen.

The delay of issuing out recommendations for the APL took a bit of time, much to many bids anger, a few interested parties lost interest.

Hopefully this won't be the case for the spectators that have watched the old NSL for the past 20 odd years.

Many have been stuck in two minds thinking whether they will see another top flight football match again in Australia or will they be urged to watch their local state competitions for the next few years.

It would be nice to see the SMH or the Daily Telegraph putting a bit more information on the round ball game as promoting soccer starts from there.

Television rights too must be resolved swiftly and accordingly.

SBS look like they won't be in the running for the APL rights due to their commitments with the 2006 World Cup in Germany.

Channel 7 will have splurged heavily on the Olympics in Athens this year leaving channels nine, ten and PAY-TV open for suggestions.

Let's hope that the public see more active moves from the new ASA board as the clock ticks on and yet another day of waste is evident with yet no Australian soccer news in any media outlet.

BRESCIANO'S PARMA INSOLVENT

You've got to feel for Socceroo star Marco Bresciano and his current situation at Italian Serie A club Parma.

Having played the best football of his career so far, Bresciano would have been rocked with the news that Parmalat Finanziaria stated that their soccer club have been declared insolvent by the Parma court.

A report by the Italian newsagency Ansa said Parma have debts of 309.6 million euros ($366m), liquid assets of e400, 000 and credit lines available of e41m.

Currently sixth in the Serie A, no interest has been seen in acquiring the club from industrial companies in the Parma area.

Its almost certain now that our very own Marco Bresciano will be looking for a new team to call home next season.

Offers have flooded in from rival Italian clubs plus English Premier League sides also.

Currently at the peak of his career, it's a shame that the club's wrong-doings have taken the limelight off his and many other Parma stars performances this year.

NO DRAWS BLATTER?

Its really becoming a common theme in the world of football that FIFA President Sepp Blatter is coming out more and more these days hurling new rules to a game that needs not to be touched.

First it was Sepp's great idea in having women play in their lycra G-Strings for more appeal towards the female game now a new possible rule has hit the world of soccer.

The latest brainwash by Blatter has him stating that the simple draw in a soccer game should be outlawed and that possible penalty shoot-outs should take place to grab a winner –what an idea that would!

Australians knew first hand how terrible that idea was back in the early 90's when the penalty scenario took place.

Almost every club and player rallied against the idea stating that its wrong begging to find out a winner.

The latest brainstorm from Sepp only suggests the more further that football wants to tap into the U.S. market.

What on earth for…The game is doing well as it is, it is the most played sport around the globe, tapping into the U.S. system with these new rules will only destroy this beautiful game.

The MLS itself has done well in America, however by no means it will never be a UEFA Champions League.

Hopefully Blatter is only thinking of these ideas and that these won't be sanctioned by the governing body, for the games sake.

I cannot imagine a game nor in that matter a league with no draws, can you?

Leave the game as it is, football needs no change, that is why its called the number one sport in the world.

ST ETIENNE AND WOLLONGONG TO LINK?

Its merely discussions at this stage but the city of Wollongong is in talks with French city St Etienne in a bid to bring closer towns together as part of a brother to brother relationship.

The Lord Mayor of Wollongong Alex Darling has stressed that everything from its agriculture, to its sport could be linked in some way between the pair.

The common factor that binds both this wonderful towns together is the fact that both places are noted for its steel and coal resources.

It was evident that the recent tour of Eddie Tesoro's Wollongong Wolves' youth squad in France highlighted the fact that Wollongong is serious about this joint venture.

Brochures, pendants, posters even videos were given to the locals of St Etienne as part of further educating them about the Australia's steel city.

ASA OUTLINES BID PROCESS

Teams bidding for the new national soccer league could know their fate by August. The Australian Soccer Association (ASA) outlined the process for teams being admitted to the league.

The ASA will take out advertisements in newspapers in Australia and New Zealand next month seeking expressions of interest.

Organisations will then have two weeks to register their interest and a further six weeks to lodge bid documents.

The ASA says it hopes to evaluate all bids for the eight-team league by August.

Four months and counting for any hopeful APL clubs.

SBS GAINS RIGHTS FOR OZ-TURKEY CLASH

Yet again the Australian station noted as the only 'soccer' channel dedicated to showing fans the best of the round ball game will show-case live both Sydney and Melbourne matches between the Socceroos and Turkey next month.

Keep this handy readers, May 21st – Sydney and May 24th – Melbourne will see SBS take on a full-coverage of the match that will see a number of stars from both sides turn out (matches will be delayed though in both host city's)

This event will surely be a spectacle and is a must for any Socceroo or Turkish fan. With no soccer currently played on a national scale it's the next best thing so get your tickets in.

ASK OZDENAK FOR TIPS

Not many fans would know this unless but Australia posses one key weapon that could ultimately have a huge bearing come the Socceroos v Turkish clash later next month.

Former Galatasary assistant-coach and Cosmos star in the U.S. Yasin Ozdenak could be the ideal man to contact in finding secrets behind the Turkish squad.

Currently leading newly promoted Sydney Crescent Star in the NSW Premier League this year, Ozdenak's experience at international is second to none and his tips could be used as a weapon against the Turkish squad.

Having steered his side to the Continental Cup Final and also embedding his promoted squad in the top four of the State competition, Ozdenak's ability has surely been there for everyone to see.

Not that coach Frank Farina needs any help in coaching his squad, extra tips on his opponents could be essential in this friendly battle.

ESSENDON ROYALS AKA SOUTH MELBOURNE

Victorian Premier League club the Essendon Royals can be regarded as a mini South Melbourne after its recent acquisitions in its new squad.

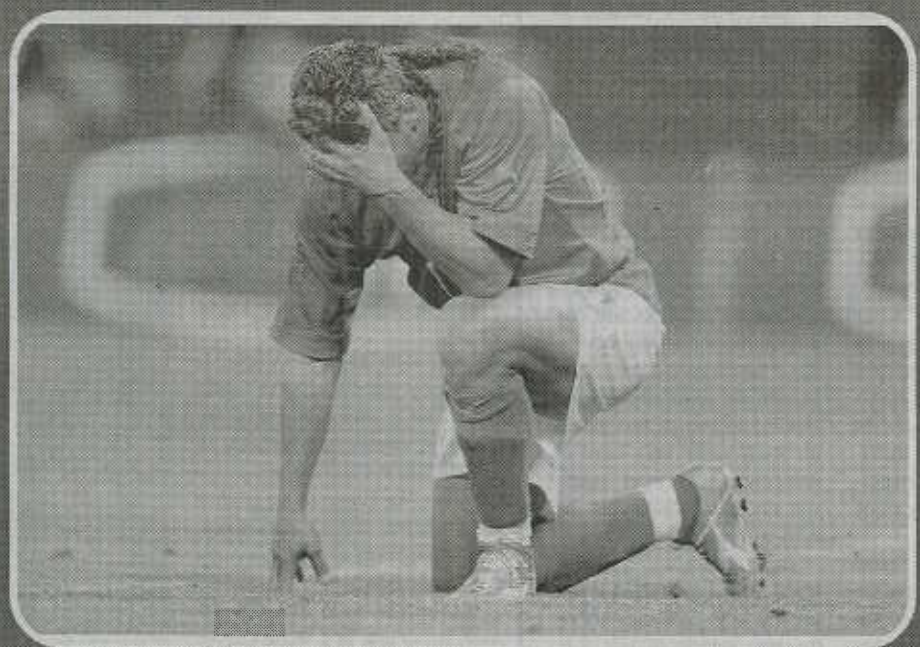
Coached by former South veteran David Clarkson, the club has brought the strike force of South in Michael Curcija and Vaughan Coveny together, not to mention a few more youth stars in the squad.

Its been a national trend having ex-National League stars turn out for their respective state teams across the nation.

Apart from Melbourne, Sydney, Perth, Adelaide, Wollongong, Newcastle and Brisbane has seen a number of former NSL stars take to the pitches.

Its also understood that a few of these NSL stars have been making more money a week than what they were officially on with their respective NSL sides.

photooftheweek



How sweet it was to see Roberto Baggio don the Italian jersey one more time in their friendly clash against Spain last week.
Baggio showed the world that he still has what it takes to play amongst the elite. My question is, why isn't he considered in Trapattoni's final selection squad, I'd have Baggio in my books any day would you?

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

(Giovanni Trapattoni on Roberto Baggio's possible last match?)

"I saw him leave the field with tears in his eyes.
He loves football and he has given the game so much.
'There is no future but I know where Baggio is. He trains 70 kilometres from me,' said the Italy coach.

Green and Gold Army Series

Green & Gold Army
http://www.ggarmy.com

GGArmy Shopping is here!!!

The GGArmy department store is now open. We have new and improved **Bucket hats and T-Shirts** that will be ready for the Turkey matches – order through our secure on-line store **NOW** to ensure pick up or delivery in time for the upcoming Turkey friendlies.

The GGArmy have also struck an exclusive deal for pre-release copies of the new Socceroos Anthem from the Music Men and are also taking pre-orders for a **1974 style retro Socceroos top,** logon and checkout the whole new shopping facility at GGArmy.com.

Dukes and Kewell are committed – are you?

After some initial teething problems, tickets in the GGArmy area for the Turkey Friendlies are selling fast! Viduka and Kewell have committed to the matches as have the rest of the side – **now it's YOUR turn.**

To access seating in the Green and Gold Army section you must quote the code **'GGARMY'** from the relevant ticket agencies.

Friday May 21 Aussie Stadium 7.30pm
Tickets on Sale now in our Bays 1-3
TICKETEK (02) 9266 4800
***This offer is only available OVER THE COUNTER or PHONE**
TICKETS ARE SELLING FAST – HURRY!!

Monday May 24 Telstra Dome 7.30pm
Tickets on sale now in our Bays 25-28
www.ticketmaster7.com.au
***This offer is only available ONLINE or OVER THE COUNTER only.**

For those who have accessed tickets in non-GGArmy areas (Bays 47,48,1 or 2 at Telstra Dome) we apologise for any mis-communication and misunderstanding as this was beyond our control but we have some good news. You can swap your tickets for seats in the GGArmy areas of Bays 25-28 by simply dropping into your local outlet.

Plains, Trains and Automobiles – GGArmy style

Depending on your budget, there are a number of ways of getting to these games across Australia. If you're looking to head from Sydney to Melbourne or vice versa for the games, here are some train specials that will ensure you are with fellow soccer fans.

For Canberra folk

We are organising a hit and run mission from the capital leaving at around 3pm on Friday May 21. The bus will then leave straight after the game and arrive back in the early hours of Saturday. The price is **only $25** and to confirm your spot simply e-mail juniorleague@soccercanberra.com.au

CountryLink have these great offers available by calling 13 22 22 – ensure you quote Carriage G

$58.30 one way. 14-day advance purchase fare.

Sydney Match (Quote Carriage "G"):

Depart Melb Spencer St 7:45pm Thurs 20th May
Arrive Syd Central 6:25am Fri 21st May

Depart Syd Central 7:43am Sat 22nd May
Arrive Melb Spencer St 6:28pm Sat 22nd May

Melbourne Match (Quote Carriage "G")

Depart Syd Central 8:43pm Sun 23rd May
Arrive Melb Spencer St 7:00am Mon 24th May

Depart Melb Spencer St 8:30am Tues 25th May
Arrive Syd Central 7:13pm Tues 25th May

And of course there are still some advance purchase flights available – BOOK NOW. For those interested in group accommodation for the Sydney game contact admin@ggarmy.com immediately as this will be booked no later than Monday 26/4

Pre-match Functions

Wondering where to wet your whistle before the game with your GGArmy comrades? Details of all pre-match functions for Melbourne, Sydney and Adelaide are coming shortly- keep checking www.ggarmy.com for details.

Make sure you are decked out in the green and gold for these games and remember we want energy from everyone – bring your flags and banners and get ready to roar!!

The APL on TV – with a cherry on top

Comment
By Mark Van Aiken

SBS head of sport Les Murray has stated publicly that his network would not entertain sharing the rights to the revamped national soccer league.

He argued that such a deal could not work. This appears at odds with the current half billion dollar rights arrangement that the AFL enjoys with Channels 9 and 10 and Pay-TV's Fox Footy Channel.

While it is understandable that Murray would want Soccer to remain the sole domain of SBS, it seems that the ASA vision would extend beyond soccer's traditional broadcast home. The O'Neill/Lowy administration has already shown that it is willing to bet the house on potential fans ahead of existing ones by scrapping the NSL.

It is rumored that Pay-TV will play a role in the formation of the new league. This isn't a revelation in itself; however the question is how much of a role will it play. Looking at the nations second most popular national competition, the NRL, we can see that even so called 'big' sports can be dominated by the Subscription television set.

Murray was reported in the Herald Sun as saying he would be comfortable with a partnership with a Pay-TV provider but loathe to work with another Free to air network. While SBS has been an ardent promoter of the world game in Australia since its inception two decades ago don't be surprised if the ASA bypasses football's home for perceived greener pastures in the form of the commercial networks.

Though Channel 7 recently had the rights for the NSL it became apparent that their only interest was in the attached Socceroos rights. The network largely neglected the NSL product but with a revamped and hyped up league, Kerry Stokes' network may again be looking for something to beef up its Spring/Summer sports line up. Channel 10 may also be interested, however its understood only in a shared arrangement similar to that they enjoy with the AFL.

Rugby League long shared its broadcast rights between the ABC and Channel 10 and the current AFL arrangement has had some hiccups but appears to be delivering all parties benefits. Channel 9 currently picks the cream of the matches for its flagship Friday night broadcast while Channel 10 then picks the next best matches and holds the rights to the finals as a trade off. Fox Footy Channel picks up the rest and while it has driven sales in Southern markets it is reported to be a sizable loss maker for Foxtel and its partners.

John O'Neill's former code of Rugby Union is still coming to grips with 7's decision to scrap the premium Super 12 content and it can now only be seen on Pay-TV.

The ASA is faced with a difficult decision. Not only have SBS covered Soccer for over twenty years, they have covered it well. While SBS would give the game the royal treatment it is imagined that the commercial networks will pay it little more than lip service. But if the decision comes down to all of Australia being exposed to one or two games per week versus only some of Australia seeing most games you can guess which way the ASA will lean.

The APL needs every bit of broad market promotion it can get and sadly SBS may not be the best vehicle to that. Les please reconsider – let Packer and Stokes take the cream on top of the sundae and we will stick with you for the rest: the ice cream, the cherries, the topping-the lot.

'Bend It' Like Ruby

By Mark Stavroulakis

"Soccer isn't just a game for the boys, its also made for the girls", was the simple quote 16-year-old rising sensation Ruby Taylor explained to ABSW.

Currently labelled as one of the hottest prospects in the NSW Women's Super League, Taylor has already surpassed a number of achievements in her so far short career.

"I started playing football when I was nine. Back then I lived in the U.S. and played for a youth club there. Three years ago I made the trek from there to Australia and played for the CIS in 2000 and 2001 before being selected in Sutherland's super league squad".

It was at the Shire, many officials and coaches realised in Taylor's ability and that is where she gained the honour of representing her state in both the U16 and U17 age groups.

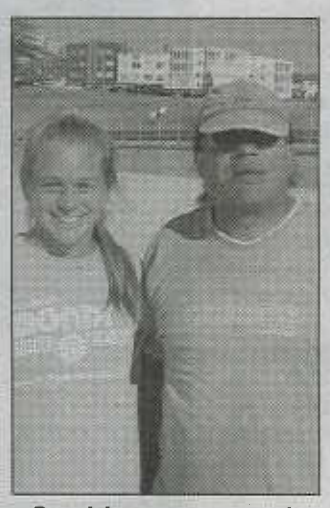
Hailing Mia Hamm as her greatest female player, Taylor's mature outlook for her future is quite professional to say the least.

"I'd love to some day play for Australia, to play in a World Cup or the Olympic Games would be the best feeling ever, but they are obviously long term goals. Short-term I guess would be to play college soccer in the States as the U.S. is by far the most professional women's set up in the world".

One of her main influences on her game has been former Socceroo and Argentine born star Hector Martinez.

Currently running his famous beach camps at Bondi, Martinez has been a main instigator in Ruby's success.

"Training with Hector Martinez has been great. He has helped me become more expressive in my game and has really helped me with the mental side of football as well. Overall, gaining expert knowledge from him has been brilliant".



Promising young women's star Ruby Taylor shown with her skills coach Argentine Hector Martinez during one of his Bondi Soccer Academies.

At the moment, Australian football has been starved in terms of media exposure with no National League being played.

Australian women's football has been fighting that battle ever since it started introducing the game to females from across the nation.

Young Taylor believes that more exposure is needed in bolstering the spot.

"I think its sad how little exposure women's soccer actually gets. Apart from the Super League wrap and Soccerwoman in ABSW there is pretty much nothing in the main stream media. I think the game could be huge in Australia, however it is slowly getting bigger with the achievements of the Matildas".

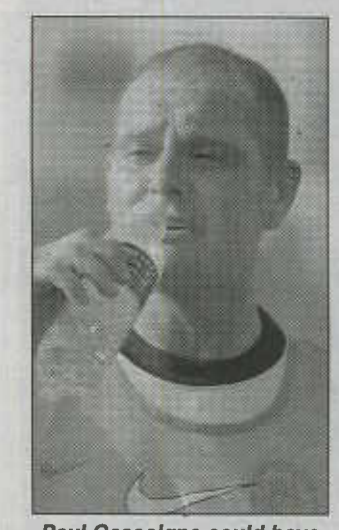
Currently playing her trade for Sutherland's first team, Ruby has been placed amongst the older pack.

Some experts regard that as suicide, others see it as a great way to progress to the top.

"Suicide is the last thing that should be said about playing in an older age group. Its great knowing that I play week in week out against current NSW Sapphires players and even Young Matildas players. On a whole, it has helped my game out for the better".

One thing's for sure, ear-mark Ruby Taylor as a future Matildas star, as the saying goes, bend it like Ruby could be the next monster hit in soccer pitches near you.

Gazza could have been a Kiwi



Paul Gascoigne could have played in New Zealand!

Otago coach Neil MacKenzie has revealed how close New Zealand football came to having Paul Gascoigne playing in their local competition.

Speaking with new NZ footie mag, Soccer Talk, MacKenzie confirmed that Dunedin City was offered the chance of signing Gazza on-loan while he was just breaking through into the Newcastle United first team.

But after talks with then Middlesbrough manager Jack Charlton, MacKenzie, who also worked at West Brom with the likes of Bryan Robson, Cyrille Regis and Remi Moses, decided against signing Gazza and instead went for Peter Haddock, who became a great acquisition for Kiwi football.

MacKenzie is overseeing another Otago youth team squad, which will visit Northern Ireland for the Milk Cup later this year.

Gazza could have been the new force of promoting the New Zealand soccer scene but unfortunately it was not meant to be.

This news comes following Gascoigne's suicide scare last week. Gascoigne, 36, told Sky Sports News he had not had a drink for a year.

But the former Newcastle United, Tottenham Hotspur, Lazio and Rangers player said in an emotional interview that it continues to be a tough struggle.

"There's been suicide thoughts, I don't mind admitting that," he said. "It's been as low as that for a few days and I don't want any sympathy – you've asked a question and I've given an honest answer.

"I honestly thought I couldn't live without a drink."

His alcoholism has been blamed in the media for causing the break-up of his marriage and sparked a string of lurid headlines of drunken behaviour ever since he was left out of England's squad for the 1998 World Cup finals.

"Over the months it's got better and better...but I can't sit on my backside and think tomorrow's going to be great. I've got to work at it," he said.

"I've had so many challenges in my life – and I'm on a big challenge now."

He said he thinks alcoholism is a "dangerous" word to use and that although he has discussed the issue before in the media, it has never come from the heart.

"Maybe I drank over (because of) fame...and feelings," he said.

Gascoigne, who also played for Middlesbrough, Everton and, briefly, Burnley, made a triumphant return to form at the 1996 European championship in England before the team was again beaten in the semi-finals by Germany in a penalty shootout.

He won 57 caps for England in a 10-year international career.

An attempt to resurrect his soccer fortunes in China with Gansu Tianma, a B-league team, ended prematurely last year after a pay dispute.

He also tried his luck in the United States without success and earlier this season conceded he was no longer up to standard after a trial with Wolverhampton Wanderers. His drinking problem had flared up again in China and he attended a drying-out clinic in Arizona for five weeks in mid-2003 to set his life straight.

Since then, British newspapers have reported that he has been reconciled with his wife Sheryl.

Penang stunned at Cardozo U-turn

Penang admit they were quite shocked at the U-turn performed by Aussie striker Pablo Cardozo last week.

The ex-Sydney Olympic star striker was to join the M-League outfit after returning to Sydney to work on his fitness, but then chose not to accept Penang's offer.

"We were looking forward to Cardozo's return from Sydney but we had a shock when his agent told us that Cardozo had decided not to turn out for Penang," Penang FA secretary Mohd Junid told The Star.

"Cardozo did not offer any reasons for his decision. All his agent said when I called him last Tuesday was that he has changed his mind about joining Penang."

Penang won't give up on Aussie strikers, however, with Mohd Junid adding, "We will continue with our search for another striker.

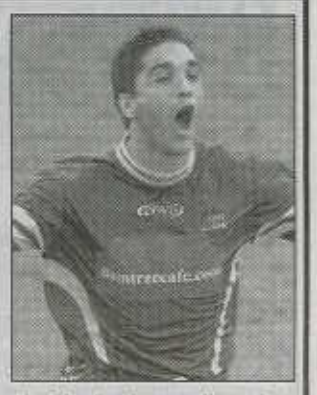
In fact, Cardozo's agent has said that he still have two other strikers for us to test out."

Its believed that Pablo could take part in one of NSW's Winter Super League clubs with Stanmore Hawks rumoured to be the club Cardozo will be playing at.

Cardozo's younger brother Richie, 18, is doing well in his trials over at Argentina. Currently at River Plate, younger Cardozo could spend up to three months over in his mother's native country before deciding on his future.

Its been a different story all together for one of Pablo's old friends in Ante Milicic.

The NSL's Player of the Year has turned heads at Pahang in the Malaysian Super League in his first few games for the club.



Pablo Cardozo will not be returning to Malaysia this season.

Already having three goals towards his new account in Malaysia, Milicic has been a hit with both fans and club officials in his so far start to the MSL season.

Headscarf ban referee may face the heat

Afifa Saad: Female player that was ordered to remove her Islamic headscarf during a match last week. (Photo taken from the 'Daily Telegraph')

A Victorian referee who ordered a female soccer player to remove her Islamic headscarf could face disciplinary action.

A devout Muslim Afifa Saad, 20, was told to remove her white scarf (hijab) during a game on Monday.

When she refused the game was postponed and then rescheduled.

The Victorian Soccer Federation is waiting for a formal report from the referee and the soccer clubs involved before deciding what action to take.

The federation's Leslie Burrows says Afifa is being offered every support.

"She has said that South Melbourne [Women's] Soccer Club has been extremely supportive of her and her team-mates. They are a very, close team," she said.

"She is very, very appreciative of their support."

The talented teenager has been tipped to make the Australian squad in the near future.

Club officials have said that Saad has what it takes to go to the next level with her skills in the round ball game.

South Melbourne Women's coach Alex Alexpoulos said that Afifa is certainly one to watch out for but explained the pain the female player went through after the ordeal.

"She was crying. She said to the others 'Play without me'. They said "No, you don't play we don't play,' he stated to the 'Daily Telegraph'.

Ms Saad has threatened anti-discrimination proceedings and VSF referee development manager Chris Bambridge said that the referee could face disciplinary action.

"I think she is probably owed an apology,", Bambridge said to the '*Daily Telegraph*'.

Reputation not the selection for Farina

Farina intends to select his full complement of three over-age players in the under-23 Olympic squad as allowed under Olympic rules.

But rather than offering the roles to the country's best two players Harry Kewell and Mark Viduka, Farina said in a teleconference on Tuesday he wanted to use over-age players to plug the weak spots in his squad.

"In my mind, I haven't decided yet on who they will be," Farina said.

"It depends largely on the availability of players and it's also a position-based thing. "We'll pick those players in positions where we need to be strong and develop as a squad.

"We won't be picking players just on reputation. It's a bit more than that."

News that Tim Cahill, Mark Schwarzer and even Marco Bresciano have been considered as possible players for the over-age scenario in Athens later this year.

The Olympic squad is still going through a testing period with a number of youngsters given chances to strut their stuff in various friendly matches that have been organized by Farina and the ASA.

Recently, Adelaide United's Freddy Agius gained a call-up against Tunisia last week.

His story is one for many to read about after taking out a year playing Australian Rules then branching onto the soccer game once more.

Not bad for a kid that was kicking goals for six points a few months back.

Players such as Agius are on the fringes of Farina's squad.

QLD PREMIER LEAGUE

Due to a public holiday that took place in the sunny state of Queensland last week no games were played in both the Premier League and Division 1 leagues.

Below is the current tables for both divisions.

ABSW's Glenn Davis will be back next week in providing the readers the latest in QLD Premier League news and results.

PREMIER LEAGUE

	P	W	L	D	For	Ag	Pts
Queensland Lions	8	8	0	0	35	4	24
Mitchelton	8	5	1	2	18	10	17
Palm Beach	8	4	2	2	18	10	14
Rochedale Rovers	7	3	2	2	12	13	11
Pine Rivers	7	3	2	7	11	18	11
Eastern Suburbs	8	3	4	1	10	13	10
Brisbane City	7	3	3	1	9	12	10
Brisbane Wolves	7	2	4	1	12	17	7
Toowoomba	6	2	3	1	4	12	7
Souths United	8	2	5	1	7	17	7
North Star	8	1	5	2	7	14	5
Taringa Rovers	8	1	6	1	13	16	4

DIVISION ONE

	P	W	L	D	For	Ag	Pts
Brisbane Olympic	7	6	0	1	13	2	19
Peninsula Power	8	5	1	2	18	8	17
Uni of Qld	8	4	1	3	22	9	15
Beenleigh	8	4	2	2	17	9	14
Ipswich Knights	8	4	3	1	13	9	13
Redlands United	8	3	3	2	15	12	11
Southside Eagles	8	3	3	2	13	13	11
Mt Gravatt	8	3	4	1	14	12	10
The Gap	8	1	2	5	13	18	8
Albany Creek	7	1	5	1	12	20	4
Rocklea United	8	1	6	1	5	23	4
Capalaba	8	1	6	1	5	25	4

ITALIAN SERIE A

ITALIAN AFFAIR

By Joe Russo

Roberto Baggio was name on everyone's lips last week in Italy as, arguably the greatest ever of the Azzurri, appeared back in the Italy strip after five long years. Sadly it could have been for the very last time.

With only four minutes remaining in the friendly match between Italy and Spain in Genoa Baggio left the field to a standing ovation. The Italian media called it 'Baggio-day' but make no mistake about it

Italy is still Baggio crazy.

The 30,300 people present at the Marassi Stadium in Genoa showed what the entire nation thinks about this great champion. The player known as 'Divin Codino' (The Divine Ponytail) left the field in the national team colours for the last time.

It was something many people had given up on witnessing but Giovanni Trapattoni, the coach who despite enormous public pressure refused to take him to the last World Cup, gave

Baggio the send off he truly deserved.

Trapattoni has already made up his mind about his squad for Portugal 2004 next month but the Italian public will not be satisfied unless Baggio is part of that squad. However, unless a miracle happens and somehow Trapattoni changes his mind, that will not occur. It must be a very good Italy team to be able to do without Baggio.

At 37 years old Baggio is still a great player. He may not be the same player as at Italia 90 or USA 94 but he has lost little of his magic touch. Against Spain he showed that he was still capable of playing football at international level.

Week after week in the regular Serie A competition Baggio is still amongst the best players. He is definitely the driving force

for Brescia.

Afterwards Baggio thanked profusely the Italian public that has supported him throughout his career. His every touch in this game against Spain was greeted with great applause.

Baggio has already announced that he will retire at the end of this season. Despite still being courted by several clubs, he said it was most unlikely that he would continue playing.

However, with Baggio there does not seem to be definites.

This was Trapattoni's farewell gift to Baggio and he should be thanked for his kind gesture. This great player will now end his

career having represented Italy on 56 occasions and scored 27 goals.

He should have probably doubled that amount of appearances but personality clashes saw him denied his rightful place in various

Italy teams over the years. When Arrigo Sacchi was in charge of Italy Baggio missed out on a place for Euro 96 and under Trapattoni, as mentioned, he was denied his fourth World Cup. Euro 96 and World Cup 2002 were extremely forgettable tournaments for Italy which is unlikely just to be a coincidence.

Baggio this year scored his 200th Serie A goal when Brescia played Parma.

Trapattoni was probably hoping to make up for his past sins by allowing Baggio to be farewelled by the adoring Italian public.

Baggio has been an extremely loyal player to Italy and at no stage did he ever lose his desire to play for his country. His last

appearance for Italy was five years ago in Ancona.

He has overcome some incredible injuries and has played for Fiorentina, Juventus, AC Milan, Bologna, Inter and Brescia. He rejected many lucrative offers to head overseas, particularly to Japan, and always chose to be loyal to the Serie A. And the

Italian public has never forgotten that. Baggio's first Serie A goal was way back in 1987 playing for Fiorentina against Diego

Maradona's Napoli. The irony was that Baggio would become Italy's own Maradona without the misdemeanours off the field.

Now that such a great career is over one can only sit back very humbly say thanks for the great memories. We were privileged to have witnessed such a great player in action.

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NSW readers can tune into 98.5 FM on Sunday nights at 10.00pm for all the latest soccer news locally and abroad with myself, Joseph Carlucci, Mark Stavroulakis, Robert Scarselletta and Stuart Jones.

AC MILAN 1
AS ROMA 0

Milan won their 17th title after a second minute header from Ukrainian striker Andriy Shevchenko gave them a nine-point advantage over their second-placed rivals with two games left.

Brazilian Kaka produced a pinpoint cross from the right and Shevchenko rose superbly to head past sprawling Roma keeper Ivan Pelizzoli.

There were ugly scenes as the game was twice stopped in the second half after Roma fans hurled fireworks and missiles on to the pitch. After a Roma appeal for a penalty was controversially turned down, Milan's Gennaro Gattuso was stunned by a powerful firework that exploded near him.

Milan goalkeeper Dida had to receive medical attention after he was struck by objects thrown from the crowd.

CHIEVO 2
MODENA 0

Luigi Sala's 69th minute header gave Chievo Verona the lead. Modena had the opportunity to equalise on 73 minutes but Omar Milanetto's spot kick was blocked by Luca Marchegiani.

With Modena pouring forward Chievo struck on the counter attack and made sure of the win when Brazilian Amauri slotted home from close range in the dying seconds.

EMPOLI 2
BOLOGNA 0

Empoli's victory boosted their chances of avoiding the drop.

Defender Manuel Belleri's first Serie A goal, a header from an Ighli Vannucchi free kick, gave the Tuscan side a deserved lead six minutes before the break.

Vannucchi then turned scorer when his beautifully struck free kick found the back of the net on 73 minutes. The win lifts Empoli up to third from bottom on 30 points, level with Modena with two matches remaining.

LAZIO 1
REGGINA 1

Lowly Reggina moved closer to safety after earning a hard-fought point at the Stadio Olimpico.

Claudio Lopez headed home a Sinisa Mihajlovic cross on 23 minutes to give Roberto Mancini's side the lead before Francesco Cozza levelled the score with a second-half penalty. Reggina are now fifth from bottom on 31 points, level with Siena.

LECCE 2
INTER 1

Lecce assured themselves of top flight football next season after the win over a disappointing Inter.

Brazilian Adriano gave Inter the lead when he slotted home a 35th minute penalty after being brought down by Cedric Konan.

Midfielder Max Tonetto levelled two minutes after the break when he scored from an Ernesto Chevanton cross before defender Cesare Bovo blasted home after a goalmouth scramble on 69 minutes to give Lecce all three points.

Inter's defeat leaves them level with Lazio on 53 points, two behind Parma, who currently occupy the fourth and final Champions League berth.

PARMA 3
ANCONA 1

Parma closed in the final Champions League place with the victory over relegated Ancona.

Alberto Gilardino put the home side ahead on nine minutes, controlling a precise pass from Benito Carbone before lobbing over keeper Sergio Marcon. Six minutes later Carbone took advantage of a defensive error to slot home Parma's second.

Australian Mark Bresciano volleyed home a Marco Marchionni free kick to make it 3-0 on the half hour before Christian Bucchi pulled one back for Ancona three minutes later.

PERUGIA 1
JUVENTUS 0

Fabrizio Ravanelli's goal early in the second half kept second-from-bottom Perugia's slim chances of staying up alive.

Al Saadi Gaddafi, the son of Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi, made his first league appearance of the season when he came on as a substitute midway through the second half after Juve had defender Ciro Ferrara sent off for a second bookable offence.

SAMPDORIA 1
UDINESE 3

Marek Jankulovski blasted the visitors ahead with a 28th-minute free kick but Fabio Bazzani levelled with a header shortly after the restart.

Udinese then reclaimed the lead when David Pizarro slotted home a penalty awarded for a foul on Martin Jorgensen by Mirko Conte.

With four minutes remaining and with Sampdoria pressing forward Vincenzo Iaquinta finished off a well executed counter attack for his 10th goal of the season.

The win helped Udinese inch closer to a UEFA Cup berth.

AC Milan forward Andriy Shevchenko (centre) celebrates with teammates Ricardo Kaka' (left) and Andrea Pirlo after scoring against Roma.

Inter's Adriano (right) and Lecce's Cesare Bovo fight for the ball.

SIENA 0
BRESCIA 1

A second half goal from midfielder Matteo Brighi was enough for Brescia to assure Serie A football next season.

The match unexpectedly caught fire 15 minutes into the second half when Brighi latched onto a quickly taken free kick.

Five minutes later Siena had defender Suarez sent off for a last man foul. Three more players received their marching orders as the match got ugly towards the end with Brescia's Matuzalem and Brighi and Siena's Roberto D'Aversa all sent off in the last 10 minutes.

SERIE B

Atalanta 3 Vicenza 2, Ascoli 3 Catania 1, Avellino 1 Piacenza 3, Cagliari 2 Bari 1, Livorno 2 Fiorentina 0, Messina 3 Treviso 1, Palermo 3 Genoa 1, Ternana 1 Triestina 0, Torino 1 Verona 1, Salernitana 0 Albinoleffe 3, Venezia 3 Como 1, Pescara 1 Napoli 2.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1.Palermo	**40**	**19**	**14**	**7**	**63**	**35**	**71**
2.Atalanta	40	17	18	5	52	-32	69
3.Cagliari	40	18	14	8	64	-41	68
4.Messina	40	18	14	8	57	-38	68
5.Livorno	40	17	16	7	63	-40	67
6.Piacenza	40	16	16	8	40	-30	64
7.Fiorentina	40	16	14	10	46	-43	62
8.Ternana	40	15	14	11	51	-42	59
9.Triestina	40	14	17	9	46	-42	59
10.Catania	40	15	11	14	45	-46	56
11.Torino	40	12	17	11	49	-43	53
12.Vicenza	40	12	16	12	43	-42	52
13.Napoli	40	10	22	8	29	-35	52
14.Ascoli	40	12	14	14	45	-47	50
15.Albinoleffe	40	12	12	16	37	-46	48
16.Treviso	40	10	17	13	38	-42	47
17.Venezia	40	11	14	15	36	-45	47
18.Salernitana	40	12	11	17	31	-45	47
19.Genoa	40	11	13	16	41	-49	46
20.Verona	40	9	14	17	42	-59	41
21.Pescara	40	10	11	19	33	-54	41
22.Bari	40	10	10	20	42	-55	40
23.Como	40	7	12	21	31	-55	33
24.Avellino	40	5	13	22	41	59	28

FIXTURES

Sunday 2nd May

Parma	vs	Ancona
Empoli	vs	Bologna
Siena	vs	Brescia
Lecce	vs	Inter
Perugia	vs	Juventus
Chievo	vs	Modena
Lazio	vs	Reggina
Milan	vs	Roma
Sampdoria	vs	Udinese

SERIE A

AC Milan 1 Roma 0, Chievo 2 Modena 0, Empoli 2 Bologna 0, Lazio 1 Reggina 1, Lecce 2 Inter Milan 1, Parma 3 Ancona 1, Perugia 1 Juventus 0, Sampdoria 1 Udinese 3, Siena 0 Brescia 1.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1Milan	**32**	**24**	**7**	**1**	**60**	**20**	**79**
2Roma	32	21	7	4	67	16	70
3Juventus	32	19	6	7	62	41	63
4Parma	32	15	10	7	53	42	55
5Inter Milan	32	15	8	9	55	35	53
6Lazio	32	15	8	9	49	35	53
7Udinese	32	13	10	9	40	35	49
8Sampdoria	32	11	12	9	40	40	45
9Chievo	32	10	10	12	33	35	40
10Bologna	32	10	8	14	43	50	38
11Brescia	32	8	13	11	48	52	37
12Lecce	32	10	7	15	40	54	37
13Siena	32	7	10	15	37	50	31
14Reggina	32	5	16	11	26	42	31
15Modena	32	6	12	14	25	41	30
16Empoli	32	7	9	16	23	49	30
17Perugia	32	4	14	14	40	55	26
18Ancona	32	1	7	24	19	68	10

ENGLISH

ARSENAL 0
BIRMINGHAM 0

Arsenal's championship party at Highbury fell flat as they were held to a 0-0 draw by Birmingham.

The visitors packed midfield and were happy to settle for a point with Arsenal coming closest to scoring from Thierry Henry's second-half free-kick which was just wide.

Birmingham will welcome the point although their faint hopes of European football are fading.

CHELSEA 4
SOUTHAMPTON 0

Second-placed Chelsea opened up a four-point lead on Manchester United after the Stamford Bridge side beat Southampton.

After a goalless first half at Stamford Bridge Jimmy Floyd Hasselbaink's corner hit debutant Martin Crainie on the head and went past Antti Niemi just before the hour.

Frank Lampard scored twice in eight minutes late on and Glen Johnson rounded off the scoring five minutes from time.

BLACKBURN 1
MANCHESTER UTD 0

Jon Stead wrote another chapter in his fairytale season with a late winner to ensure Blackburn's Premiership status and virtually end Manchester United's hopes of finishing second in the table.

The 21-year-old produced a superb finish to beat an under-strength United, who were without Ruud van Nistelrooy, Roy Keane and Louis Saha.

It was Stead's sixth goal in 11 starts and with Chelsea beating Southampton, United will probably now have to settle for third place.

CHARLTON 2
LEICESTER CITY 2

Leicester's valiant battle against relegation from the Premiership ended after they drew 2-2 at Charlton.

Leicester surrendered the fifth-minute lead given to them by Marcus Bent as first Jon Fortune knocked in Paolo di Canio's 53rd-minute corner and then Nikos Dabizas was controversially sent off for bringing down Jonatan Johansson in the penalty area. Di Canio coolly slotted home the spot-kick.

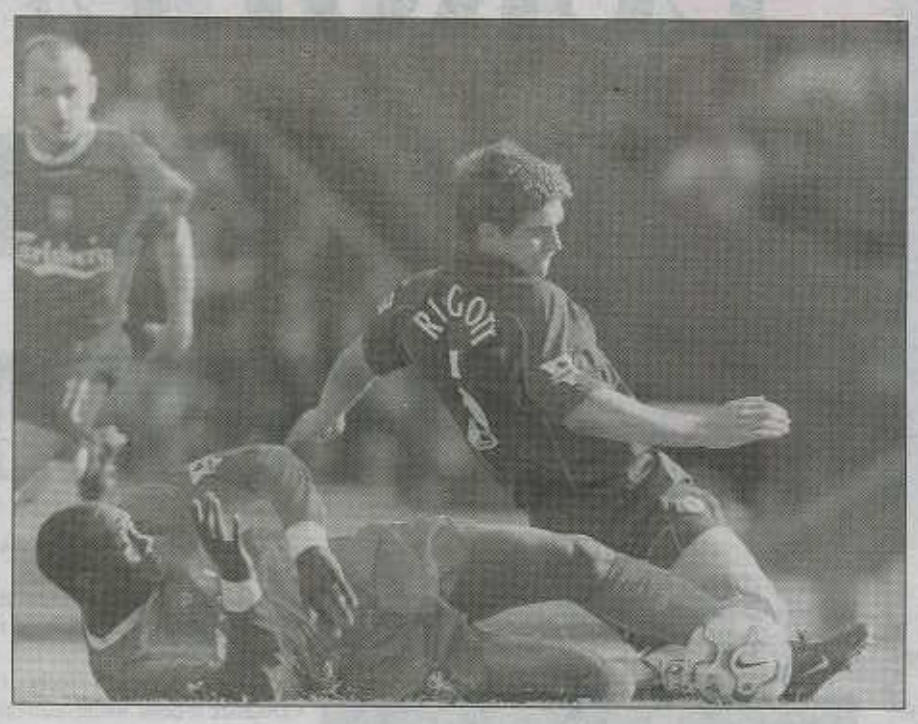
There was still time for Les Ferdinand to equalise with a well-struck free-kick, but it was not enough to keep Leicester up as Manchester City had beaten Newcastle.

WOLVERHAMPTON 2
EVERTON 1

Wolverhampton's top-flight existence is all-but mathematically over despite their 2-1 win over Everton as their goal difference is so abysmal.

Wolves fought back from 1-0 down as early as the third minute after Leon Osman marked his Everton debut with a goal.

But Henri Camara blasted home a 55th-minute equaliser and Carl Cort snatched a winner six minutes from time.



Top action in the match between Liverpool and Middlesbrough

MANCHESTER CITY 1
NEWCASTLE UTD 0

Manchester City moved ever so closer to premiership survival thanks to a 1-0 home win over Newcastle United.

Paulo Wanchope scored with a bullet header in the 59th minute for the only goal of the game.

The Costa Rican striker finally produced when it mattered, rising highest to guide Nicolas Anelka's cross past Shay Given to give City only their third win in 25 league games.

PORTSMOUTH 1
FULHAM 1

Portsmouth secured Premiership safety with Nigerian striker Aiyegbeni Yakubu's sixth goal in seven games.

But the home side had to endure a tense last few minutes in which Fulham substitute Brian McBride struck a spectacular equaliser and then missed a sitter.

Harry Redknapp's team were celebrating at the end of another sunny south coast day after they collected their 17th point from the last 21 available to extend an unbeaten run to seven matches, five of them victories.

ASTON VILLA 1
TOTTENHAM 0

Villa kept up their unlikely Champions League bid with a comfortable win as Tottenham's dire run continued.

Colombian striker Juan Pablo Angel headed Villa into the lead after five minutes and though the home side made a series of chances and Thomas Hitzlsperger hit the bar, they could not add to their tally.

It was Tottenham's sixth successive away defeat and they have now taken just two points from the last 24 in play.

LIVERPOOL 1
MIDDLESBROUGH 0

Liverpool were solid winners to stay ahead of the pack in the chase for fourth place.

After Michael Owen hit a post and Harry Kewell had a goal disallowed for offside in the first half, Danny Murphy broke the deadlock with a 49th-minute penalty after Owen was brought down.

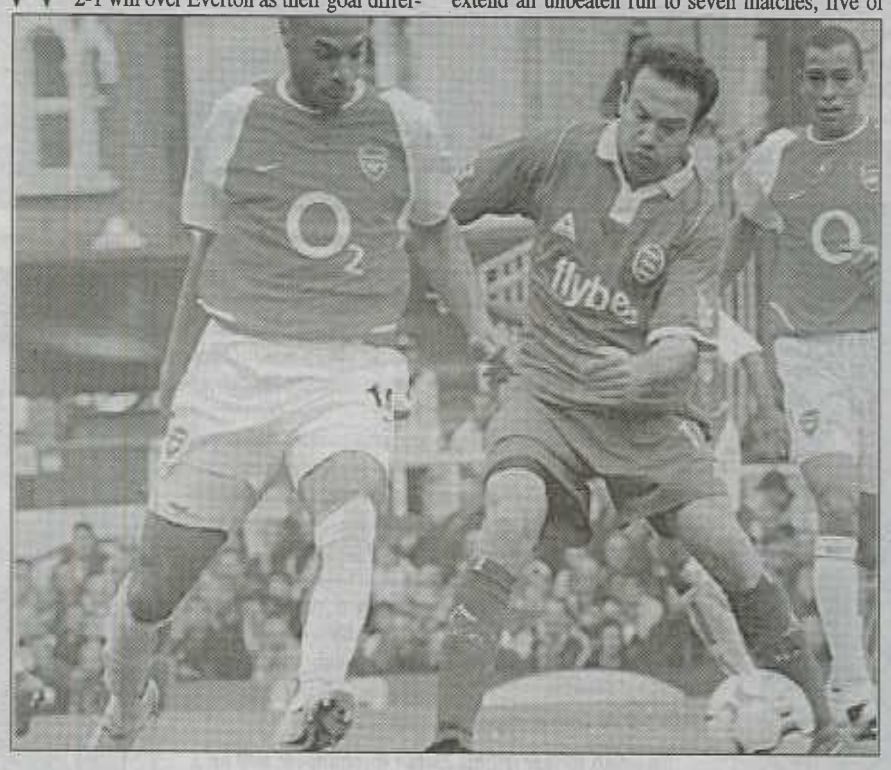
Substitute Emile Heskey got the second four minutes later and Liverpool never looked like conceding.

BOLTON 4
LEEDS UTD 1

Defeat just about confirmed Leeds's relegation while Bolton's fourth successive win pushed them up to seventh.

Mark Viduka put Leeds ahead with a 26th minute penalty but was sent off eight minutes later for two elbowing offences.

Two goals by Youri Djorkaeff and an own goal by Gary Harte turned the game in the first 10 minutes of the second half and Lee Nolan capped a great day for the hosts 12 minutes from time.



Arsenal striker Thierry Henry (left) takes on Birmingham City's Stan Lazaridis.

FIXTURES

Saturday 1st May

Arsenal	v	Birmingham
Aston Villa	v	Tottenham
Blackburn	v	Man Utd
Bolton	v	Leeds
Charlton	v	Leicester
Chelsea	v	Southampton
Liverpool	v	Middlesbrough
Man City	v	Newcastle
Portsmouth	v	Fulham
Wolverhampton	v	Everton

PREMIER LEAGUE

Arsenal 0 Birmingham City 0, Blackburn 1 Manchester Utd 0, Charlton 2 Leicester City 2, Chelsea 4 Southampton 0, Manchester City 1 Newcastle Utd 0, Portsmouth 1 Fulham 1, Wolverhampton 2 Everton 1, Aston Villa 1 Tottenham 0, Bolton 4 Leeds Utd 1, Liverpool 2 Middlesbrough 0.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Arsenal	**35**	**24**	**11**	**0**	**69**	**24**	**83**
Chelsea	36	23	6	7	65	29	75
Man Utd	36	22	5	9	61	34	71
Liverpool	36	15	11	10	51	36	56
Aston Villa	36	15	10	11	47	41	55
Newcastle	35	13	14	8	47	35	53
Bolton	36	13	11	12	46	53	50
Fulham	36	13	10	13	50	45	49
Charlton	36	13	10	13	46	47	49
Birmingham	36	12	13	11	42	44	49
Southampton	35	12	9	14	39	39	45
Middlesbrough	36	12	9	15	41	46	45
Blackburn	36	12	7	17	50	57	43
Portsmouth	35	11	8	16	40	49	41
Everton	36	9	12	15	43	50	39
Tottenham	36	11	6	19	44	57	39
Man City	36	8	14	14	49	51	38
Wolverhampton	36	7	11	18	37	74	32
Leeds	36	8	8	20	37	75	32
Leicester	36	5	15	16	44	62	30

FIRST DIVISION

Sheffield Utd 1 Ipswich 1, Bradford 0 Stoke 2, Cardiff 1 Wimbledon 1, Crystal Palace 1 Walsall 0, Derby 2 Millwall 0, Gillingham 2 Coventry 5, Norwich 3 Preston 2, Notts Forest 1 Wigan 0, Reading 1 West Bromwich 0, Rotherham 3 Burnley 0, Sunderland 1 Crewe 1, West Ham 4 Watford 0.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Norwich	**44**	**27**	**10**	**7**	**76**	**37**	**91**
West Bromwich	44	25	11	8	63	36	86
West Ham	45	19	16	10	66	44	73
Sunderland	44	20	13	11	59	44	73
Crystal Palace	45	21	10	14	71	59	73
Ipswich	45	21	9	15	83	71	72
Wigan	45	18	16	11	59	44	70
Sheffield Utd	45	20	10	15	62	53	70
Reading	45	20	10	15	55	56	70
Millwall	45	17	15	13	54	48	66
Cardiff	45	17	13	15	67	57	64
Coventry	45	16	14	15	65	53	62
Stoke	44	17	11	16	54	54	62
Preston	45	15	13	17	66	68	58
Notts Forest	45	14	15	16	59	58	57
Rotherham	45	13	15	17	51	58	54
Watford	45	14	12	19	53	68	54
Crewe	45	14	11	20	56	63	53
Burnley	45	13	14	18	59	75	53
Derby	45	13	13	19	53	66	52
Gillingham	45	14	8	23	48	67	50
Walsall	45	12	12	21	42	63	48
Bradford	45	10	6	29	38	68	36
Wimbledon	45	7	5	33	40	89	26

SECOND DIVISION

Blackpool 1, Peterborough 4, Bournemouth 0 Stockport 0, Brighton 1 Notts County 0, Colchester 2 Rushden & Diamonds 0, Grimsby 1 Brentford 0, Hartlepool 1 Plymouth 3, Luton 3 Sheffield Wed 2, Oldham 2 Chesterfield 0, Port Vale 2 Tranmere 1, QPR 1 Swindon 0, Wycombe 1 Wrexham 1, Barnsley 0 Bristol City 1.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Plymouth	45	25	12	8	83	41	87
QPR	45	21	17	7	77	44	80
Bristol City	45	22	13	10	56	36	79
Brighton	45	21	11	13	62	43	74
Swindon	45	20	12	13	75	57	72
Hartlepool	45	20	12	13	75	60	72
Port Vale	45	20	10	15	71	63	70
Bournemouth	45	17	15	13	56	50	66
Luton	45	17	15	13	69	65	66
Tranmere	45	16	16	13	57	55	64
Colchester	45	17	13	15	52	54	64
Wrexham	45	17	9	19	50	58	60
Barnsley	45	14	17	14	51	56	59
Blackpool	45	16	11	18	57	63	59
Oldham	45	12	20	13	65	59	56
Sheffield Wed	45	13	14	18	47	61	53
Stockport	45	11	19	15	60	67	52
Peterborough	45	12	15	18	57	57	51
Brentford	45	13	11	21	51	69	50
Grimsby	45	13	11	21	54	79	50
Rushden & Diamonds	45	13	9	23	60	72	48
Chesterfield	45	11	15	19	48	71	48
Notts County	45	10	11	24	49	77	41
Wycombe	45	6	18	21	49	74	36

EUROPEAN CHA
PORTUGA
HOW THEY C

By Peter Damalas

The European Championships kick off in Porto in under six weeks time with tournament hosts Portugal taking on Greece.

This promises to be the first of 31 exciting matches as the best European nations go head to head to decide which is the best team in the continent-one of the powerbrokers of world football.

Indeed, many would argue that winning the European Championships is more difficult than achieving the ultimate success in the World Cup, given the quality of teams on show.

And if this season's Champions League is any indicator, Euro 2004 will be complete with drama, tension and upset results, and will inspire the likes of Latvia, Bulgaria and Switzerland to scale the heights and prove the doubters wrong.

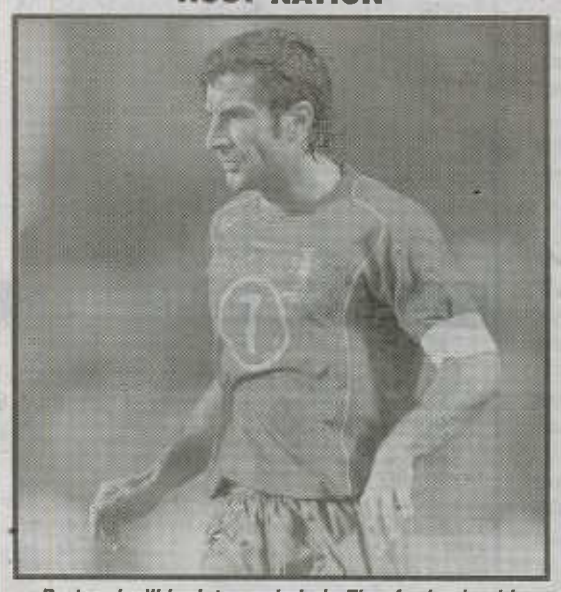
To begin ABSW's extensive coverage of the second biggest soccer tournament in the world, we take a look back at the qualifiers, which began in September 2002, and examine how the sixteen nations booked their tickets to Portugal.

Next week, a detailed preview of the teams contesting Group A, followed by Groups B, C, and D in the coming weeks.

We analyse the players, coaches and tactics, and consider the chances of each team, while in the final edition before kick-off, the focus will be on the potential Stars of the Tournament.

ABSW Chief Writer Peter Damalas will be on location in Portugal and will bring you up to date with all the stories, controversies and events surrounding Euro 2004.

HOST NATION



Portugal will look towards Luis Figo for leadership come Euro 2004.

The western European nation of Portugal was granted hosting rights for the tournament in October 1999, holding off the strong challenge of Iberian neighbours Spain, who were the favourites to host Euro 2004.

The decision by UEFA to award Portugal with this honour meant that a great deal of time, energy and above all, money (approximately 450 million Euros), was required to make the major sporting event a success, while the national team was under pressure to perform in what is regarded as the last chance for the 'Golden Generation' of Portuguese football.

Portugal have played a massive nineteen games, including two losses to Italy, wins over Sweden and world champions Brazil, draws against England (twice), the Netherlands and first round opponents Greece, and a disappointing 3-0 loss at home to Spain.

Form overall in these friendlies has been scratchy, and supporters will question the use of playing minnows such as Kazakhstan, Albania and Kuwait in the lead-up to such an important tournament.

GROUP 1

Change of coach but same old France as the defending European champions steamrolled through their qualifying group, accumulating maximum points and conceding a measly two goals.

Beware of French star Thierry Henry.

In their first match against Cyprus, the French went into the half-time break a goal down, apparently suffering a bout of post- World Cup depression, but second half goals by Djibril Cisse and Sylvain Wiltord put them on their way.

What followed was the brutal annihilation of all and sundry as Jacques Santini quickly restored faith among the players.

France knocked over Slovenia (5-0) and Malta (4-0 and 6-0), and were well ahead of the chasing pack before the difficult match with Israel.

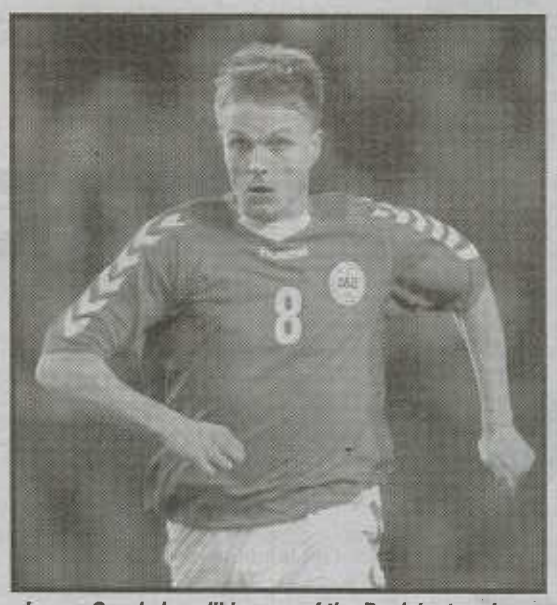
France then eased through the remaining three matches, including a two-nil win in Slovenia which condemned that nation to the play-offs.

GROUP 2

Four nations had realistic hopes of qualifying from this section, while tiny Luxembourg were simply hoping to limit the damage on their goal and achieve the odd decent result.

The opening fixture saw Denmark clash with Scandinavian rivals Norway in Oslo, and they should have claimed all three points from the encounter.

Inconsistency was a key factor in this group.



Jesper Gronkajer will be one of the Danish star players to watch out for.

Denmark travelled to Romania and came away with a magnificent 5-2 victory.

Morten Olsen's men spoiled this great work just four days later, succumbing at home to the much improved Bosnia-Herzegovina.

In the final round of matches, the Bosnians knew a win over Denmark at home would secure them automatic qualification.

The match ended 1-1, and Denmark were through, closely followed by three teams (a mere two points separated first from fourth).

Norway pipped out Romania for second spot, and a play-off position, by virtue of their better record.

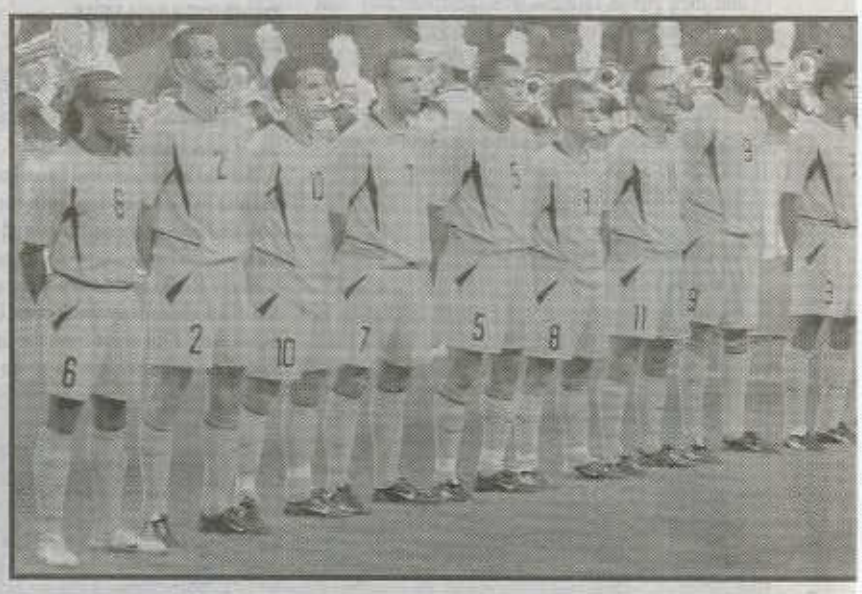
GROUP 3

Netherlands and the Czech Republic were the two powerhouses in this section, and the crunch matches between the two would ultimately decide the group winner.

Austria, Belarus and Moldova should have provided more competition for the front runners, but the gulf in class was painfully evident as they failed to take any points off the Dutch and Czechs.

At the end of March 2003, the two teams fought out a draw at the Feyenoord Stadium.

With the teams locked on points heading into the penultimate round of qualifiers, the Czech Republic had the chance to automatically qualify for Portugal with a win, and the star studded team did not disappoint the home crowd in Prague, totally outclassing their opponents 3-1, who had to regroup in time for the play-off with Scotland.



The Dutch could spurn many upsets come June.

GROUP 4

The rise of Latvia into second spot at the end of qualification overshadowed Sweden's achievement in winning the group with a game to spare.

The Swedes began in unconvincing fashion with two draws before breaking through for a win against Hungary. They comfortably disposed of San Marino and World Cup qualifiers Poland.

Meanwhile, Latvia were making steady progress.

The final match against Sweden in Solna was critical to the Latvian team, and they came away with a surprise one-nil result.

Latvia finished three points clear of Poland, and only one point behind Sweden.

Swedish striker (right) Zlatan Ibrahimovic will be a marked man in Portugal.

GROU

World Cup finalists Germany
a relatively weak group.

They began with a win in Lith
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Michael Ballack will be hopi his Germa

AMPIONSHIPS L 2004 QUALIFIED

5

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ia, but should have defeat- argin- scores were level at

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half-time before Miroslav Klose scored the winner after 59 minutes.

Their next home match produced an even more embarrassing result, 1-1 with Lithuania, which was followed by an identical score against Scotland, who finished second above the threatening Iceland team.

The Germans settled down to defeat the Scots 2-1 in Dortmund and wrapped up top spot and qualification with a win over Iceland.

GROUP 6

Greece came from nowhere to overtake Spain at the top of the standings and qualify for their first major event since the disastrous World Cup campaign in the United States in 1994.

The opening two fixtures against Spain and Ukraine- the two teams expected to qualify- procured 2-0 losses and all hope seemed ended.

The reason behind Greece's success has been thanks to German coach Otto Rehagel.

But German coach Otto Rehhagel masterminded a dramatic turnaround and the team won its remaining six matches without conceding a single goal.

A curling drive from Stylianos Giannakopoulos stunned the Spaniards in Zaragoza, and the Greeks held their nerve to see off Ukraine, Armenia and Northern Ireland.

Spain for their part did enough to finish second by taking four points off Andriy Shevchenko's team, and they entered the play-off draw.

GROUP 7

England overcame a tense final match in Turkey to top Group 7.

Earlier in the campaign, a David Seaman blunder from a corner kick gifted F.Y.R. Macedonia a draw, and England never truly convinced in the remaining fixtures, doing just enough to defeat Slovakia and Liechtenstein.

Two goals in the final fifteen minutes saw off Turkey, who were later lucky to defeat FYROM at home.

The fireworks occurred in Istanbul. In spite of a missed penalty and several scuffles, England celebrated the scoreless draw.

GROUP 8

Bulgaria were outstanding in qualifying, losing once before the final round fixture in Croatia, when they had already claimed top spot in the group.

They consistently achieved maximum points- including a first up win in Belgium, who were locked in a battle for second position. Croatia's 1-0 win over Bulgaria guaranteed them a play-off berth.

GROUP 9

Italy began poorly but finished like a house on fire to leapfrog Wales at the top of the group.

After defeating Azerbaijan, the Azzurri drew with Serbia and Montenegro and lost in Cardiff- which put their chances of qualifying in jeopardy.

What followed was a rebuilding phase- Italy defeated Finland twice and thrashed Wales in the return in a brilliant display of attacking football.

A minor setback in Belgrade and another comprehensive victory over Wales completed the comeback, leaving Mark Hughes' men to endure the play-offs.

GROUP 10

The final qualifying group was surprisingly well contested, with all five countries winning at least two games.

It was Switzerland who came up trumps in the end, winning in Ireland, who dropped valuable points away to Albania.

Russia inflicted the Swiss with their sole loss, a 4-1 thrashing, but they had their own troubles, losing to Albania and Georgia before romping into second.

Italy want to do better than their horrid 2002 World Cup showing in June.

David Beckham will lead his English squad to hopeful success at the Euro Championships.

PLAY-OFFS

The main talking point at this stage was the surprise elimination of Turkey by Latvia, who won the first leg one-nil and came back from two goals down to draw in the daunting Istanbul.

Meanwhile, the Netherlands finally hit peak form with a six goal thrashing of Scotland in the second leg, after losing the first match by a single goal.

Spain faced a tough test at home to Norway in the first match, but were surprisingly at ease in the cold of Oslo and goals from Raul, Vicente and Joseba Etxeberria allowed Inaki Saez's team to progress to the tournament proper.

Russia overcame Wales and Croatia held off neighbours Slovenia in tight contests to both qualify for a second successive major tournament.

International Results

Portugal 2 (Pauleta 33, Gomes 90) **Sweden 2** (Kallstrom 17, Rui Jorge 85-og)

Italy 1 (Vieri 56) **Spain 1** (Torres 53)

Latvia 0 Iceland 0

Macedonia 0 Croatia 1 (Klasnic 33)

Netherlands 4 (Makaay 50, Zenden 58, Heitinga 61, Van Hooijdonk 89) **Greece 0**

Switzerland 2 (Celestini 66, Hakan Yakin 85) **Slovenia 1** (Zahovic 45)

Norway 3 (Andresen 25, Rushfeldt 43, Soli 62,) **Russia 2** (Radimov 85, Kirichenko 90)

Denmark 1 (Sand 60) **Scotland 0**

Romania 5 (Plesan 21, Rat 22, Danciulescu 35, 43, Caramarin 84) **Germany 1** (Lahm 88)

Bulgaria 3 (Berbatov 8, 53-pen, Lazarov 55) **Cameroon 0**

Czech Republic 0 Japan 1 (Kubo 32)

Austria 4 (Kirchler 5, Kiesenebner 9, Haas 85, Kollmann 88) **Luxembourg 1** (Huss 63)

Northern Ireland 1 (Quinn 18) **Serbia and Montenegro 1** (Paunovic 7)

Hungary 1 (Torghelle 57) **Brazil 4** (Kaka 33, Luis Fabiano 36, 45, Ronaldinho 76)

Tunisia 1 (Jedidi 56) **Mali 0**

Estonia 1 (Varga 80) **Albania 1** (Aliaj 51)

Belgium 2 (Sonck 34, Dufer 85) **Turkey 3** (Basturk 43, Tolga 69, Gokdeniz 90)

Bosnia 1 (Micimovic 88) **Finland 0**

Ivory Coast 4 (Drogba 8, Kolo Toure 32, Kalou 45, Bakari 68) **Guinea 2** (Feindouno 12, Oulare 39)

China 1 (Xiao Zhan Bo 26) **Algeria 0**

Ukraine 1 (Venglinsky 13) **Slovakia 1** (Varga 65)

Belarus 1 (Bliznyuk 75) **Lithuania 0**

Israel 1 (Kovalenko 32-og) **Moldova 1** (Rogatchev 69)

Armenia 1 (Ara Akopyan 68) **Turkmenistan 0**

Kazakhstan 2 (Karpovich 57, Lunev 80) **Azerbaijan 3** (Nabiev 31, Guliev 59, Sadygov 85)

Poland 0 Republic of Ireland 0

Morocco 0 Argentina 1 (Gonzalez 52)

South Korea 0 Paraguay 0

Spanish Primera Liga

Real Madrid's Luis Figo (centre) tries to dribble the ball between Deportivo la Coruna's Joan Capdevilla (left) and Sergio Gonzalez.

Valencia took a giant stride towards the Primera Liga title after their 2-0 victory over Real Betis enabled them to go four points clear at the top.

Cristobal Curro Torres - with his first league goal for the club - and Ruben Baraja scored a goals either side of half-time to sink the men from Seville and leave Valencia clear favourites to take the title with three games remaining.

Zinedine Zidane was sent off as Real Madrid's title hopes suffered another body blow at the Riazor, goals from Diego Tristan and Joan Capdevila handing Deportivo La Coruna a marvellous 2-0 victory.

The result was slightly unfortunate on Madrid, who hit the woodwork through Ronaldo, Raul and Esteban Cambiasso in the first half. It marks the sixth defeat in 10 games in all competitions for Real Madrid boss Carlos Queiroz.

Atletico Madrid put themselves back on course for a place in the UEFA Cup with a far-from-convincing 3-2 win over battling 10-man Celta Vigo.

Goals from Nano and Spain's midweek hero Fernando Torres inside the opening seven minutes and a third from Garcia Calvo ensured victory.

The visitors fought bravely, pulling back goals through Savo Milosevic and Edu.

Third-placed Barcelona are only five points behind the leaders after turning in another delightful display to thrash Espanyol 4-1 in the Catalan derby.

Espanyol took a surprise early lead through Raul Tamudo's penalty, but once the outstanding Ronaldinho equalised 10 minutes before the break there was only ever going to be one winner.

Javier Saviola put Barca ahead on the stroke of half-time and Giovanni van Bronckhorst and Saviola added second-half strikes to complete an imperious win.

Athletic Bilbao suffered a 2-0 defeat at the hands of Sevilla.

The home side broke the deadlock after 38 minutes when Julio Baptista connected with a corner before the same man extended his side's lead after 61 minutes from the spot.

Villarreal failed to significantly close on the top six after a 2-2 draw at struggling Real Sociedad.

And the visitors twice threw away the lead after breaking the deadlock after just 10 minutes when Jose Mari blasted home.

It took Sociedad just 20 minutes to draw level through Gabriel Schurrer but within a minute of the second half Jose Mari added to his tally for a 2-1 lead.

But on 59 minutes Igor Gabilondo drew the home side level after he connected with a rebound from the Villarreal keeper to volley the ball into the net.

Mallorca defeated Malaga 2-1 thanks to a brace from newly-crowned African Footballer of the Year Samuel Eto'o.

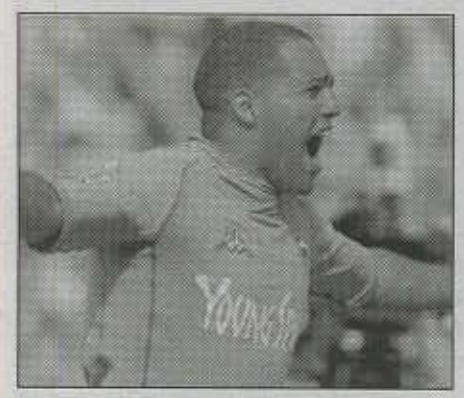
Copa del Rey winners Real Zaragoza are left looking anxiously over their shoulders after a 3-1 loss to Albacete.

Racing Santander put a huge dent in Osasuna's UEFA Cup hopes with a 2-1 win while Murcia denied relegation-threatened Valladolid three points with a 2-1 win.

Atletico Madrid 3 Celta Vigo 2, Deportivo 2 Real Madrid 0, Albacete 3 Real Zaragoza 1, Barcelona 4 Espanyol 1, Murcia 2 Valladolid 1, Osasuna 1 Santander 2, Real Mallorca 2 Malaga 1, Real Sociedad 2 Villarreal 2, Sevilla 2 Athletic Bilbao 0, Valencia 2 Real Betis 0.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1 Valencia	**35**	**22**	**8**	**5**	**68**	**24**	**74**
2 Real Madrid	35	21	7	7	68	45	70
3 Barcelona	35	20	9	6	61	36	69
4 Deportivo	35	19	8	8	56	32	65
5 Athletic	35	14	10	11	47	43	52
6 Atlético	35	14	9	12	44	46	51
7 Sevilla	35	13	10	12	51	42	49
8 Osasuna	35	11	15	9	37	33	48
9 Villarreal	35	13	9	13	44	45	48
10 Málaga	35	14	5	16	46	51	47
11 Betis	35	11	13	11	42	40	46
12 Albacete	35	12	7	16	37	43	43
13 Mallorca	35	12	6	17	45	61	42
14 Real Sociedad	35	10	11	14	42	49	41
15 Racing	35	11	9	15	46	59	41
16 Zaragoza	35	10	9	16	41	53	39
17 Valladolid	35	9	10	16	41	53	37
18 Espanyol	35	11	4	20	42	60	37
19 Celta	35	8	12	15	46	63	36
20 Murcia	35	4	11	20	27	53	23

German Bundesliga



Werder Bremen's Ailton celebrates his goal against Hamburg.

Werder Bremen moved a step closer to the title by crushing Hamburg 6-0 at the Weser Stadion.

The party started for the home crowd when Sergej Barbarez headed into his own net after 17 minutes and Valerien Ismael's free-kick doubled the advantage four minutes later.

Werder extended the lead six minutes before half-time when some slick play inside the Hamburg area resulted in Ivan Klasnic netting.

Brazilian Ailton, now the top Bundesliga scorer with 26 goals, and substitute striker Nelson Valdez contributed to the demolition in the second half before Ukraine midfielder Viktor Skripnik wrapped it up with a late penalty.

Cologne were relegated from the top flight after Bastian Schweinsteiger netted a second-half winner to maintain Bayern Munich's interest in the title race with a 2-1 victory.

Lukas Podolski had given the hosts the lead in the 24th minute but Claudio Pizarro equalised five minutes before half-time.

Relegation-threatened 1860 Munich produced a battling display but had to settle for a single point against high-fliers Bayer Leverkusen that keeps them in the drop zone with just three games remaining.

The home side opened the scoring through Australian Paul Agostino in the fourth minute 'Kusen made a telling incursion in the 48th minute, with Bernd Schneider grabbing the equaliser.

Eintracht Frankfurt's hopes of avoiding relegation were dealt a further blow as they were beaten 1-0 at Wolfsburg.

The home side took the lead after just 18 minutes when a quickly-taken corner by Andres D'Alessandro was misjudged by Frankfurt keeper Oka Nikolov, allowing Diego Klimowicz to head home.

A last-minute equaliser from Igor Demo for 10-man Borussia Moenchengladbach robbed Kaiserslautern of a win, as the game finished 2-2.

Demo struck in the final minute to ensure the situation at the bottom remains identical, with Gladbach one point above Lautern, who in turn are one point and one place above third-bottom 1860 Munich.

A crowd of 82,500 jammed the Westfalenstadion to watch Borussia Dortmund maintain their UEFA Cup challenge by beating visiting Hansa Rostock 4-1.

French defender Ahmed Madouni opened the scoring in the 11th minute. Brazilian striker Ewerthon doubled the lead in the 35th minute before Czech forward Jan Koller made it 3-0 with a header.

Rostock pulled one back through prolific striker Martin Max in the 66th minute. Substitute striker David Odonkor sealed Dortmund's victory nine minutes later.

Alexander Iashvili scored twice to help Freiburg defeat Hannover 4-1.

The home side took the lead after just 13 minutes when Sasha Riether headed home.

It took Freiburg until the 51st minute to extend their lead, Zlatan Bajramovic was the man to score but Thomas Brdaric got one back for Hannover a minute later. Thereafter Iashvili took centre stage with goals on 68 and 78.

Stuttgart held on to third place with a 1-1 draw against Bochum, who drop a spot to sixth.

Brazilian striker Cacau opened the scoring for Stuttgart after 31 minutes but the visitors levelled with a deflected volley from defender Martin Meichelbeck in the 58th minute.

Schalke stayed seventh by beating nine-man Hertha Berlin 3-0.

Turkish midfielder Hamit Altintop opened the scoring in the 19th minute, midfielder Joerg Boehme doubled the lead with a penalty in the 51st and Denmark striker Ebbe Sand wrapped it up eight minutes later.

1860 Munich 1 Bayer Leverkusen 1, Borussia Dortmund 4 Hansa Rostock 1, Cologne 1 Bayern Munich 2, Kaiserslautern 2 Moenchengladbach 2, Freiburg 4 Hannover 1, Werder Bremen 6 Hamburg 0, Wolfsburg 1 Eintracht Frankfurt 0, Schalke 3 Hertha Berlin 0, Stuttgart 1 Bochum 1.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1 Bremen	**31**	**21**	**8**	**2**	**73**	**28**	**71**
2 Bayern	31	19	8	4	66	33	65
3 Stuttgart	31	17	10	4	48	19	61
4 Leverkusen	31	16	8	7	63	37	56
5 Dortmund	31	15	6	10	53	40	51
6 Bochum	31	13	11	7	49	35	50
7 Schalke	31	12	10	9	44	38	46
8 Hamburg	31	12	6	13	43	58	42
9 Wolfsburg	31	13	1	17	53	57	40
10 Hansa	31	10	8	13	49	49	38
11 Freiburg	31	10	7	14	42	62	37
12 Moe/gladbach	31	8	9	14	34	45	33
13 Hannover	31	8	9	14	45	60	33
14 Kaiserslautern	31	10	5	16	34	55	32
15 Hertha	31	7	11	13	32	55	32
16 1860 Munich	31	8	7	16	30	48	31
17 Eintracht	31	8	5	18	32	46	29
18 Köln	31	5	5	21	27	52	20

GREEK ETHNIKI KATIGORIA

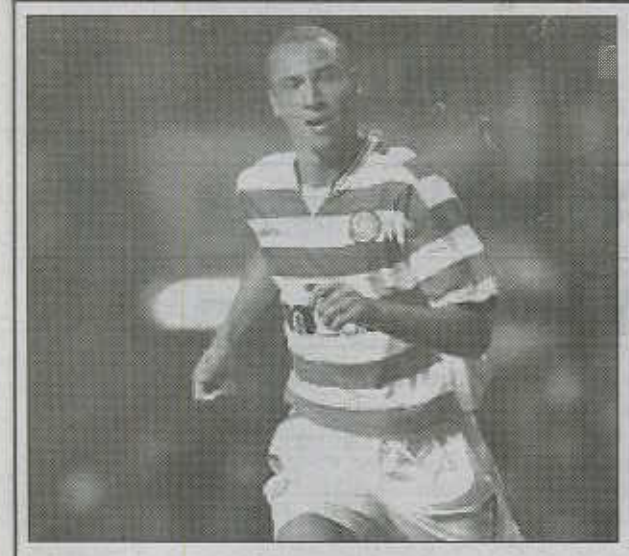
One step closer to the title: Panathinaikos players celebrate their five-one rout over Akratitios.

Xanthi 1 AEK Athens 2, Aris 1 Egaleo 0, OFI Crete 0 Kallithea 0, Halkidona 0 Olympiakos 1, Panionios 1 PAOK 0, Paniliakos 2 Ionikos 2, Panathinaikos 5 Akratitios 1, Proodeftiki 3 Iraklis 2.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1 Panathinaikos	**28**	**22**	**5**	**1**	**59**	**17**	**71**
2 Olympiacos	28	22	3	3	64	18	69
3 PAOK	28	17	5	6	44	25	56
4 AEK	28	15	6	7	52	29	51
5 Egaleo	28	15	6	7	35	22	51
6 Panionios	28	11	10	7	36	27	43
7 Halkidona	28	12	6	10	36	36	42
8 Iraklis	28	11	5	12	39	39	38
9 Xanthi	28	8	6	14	28	40	30
10 OFI	28	7	7	14	24	40	28
11 Ionikos	28	7	6	15	30	42	27
12 Kallithea	28	5	11	12	35	38	26
13 Aris	28	7	5	16	23	42	26
14 Akratitos	28	5	7	16	29	65	22
15 Paniliakos	28	4	8	16	28	55	20
16 Proodeftiki	28	4	8	16	24	51	20

WORLD

Scottish Premier League



Henrik Larsson: Celtic's star striker scored his side's only goal in their shock two-one loss to Dunfermline

Henrik Larsson found the net on the day Celtic received the trophy for their latest SPL title success, but Dunfermline shocked them by winning the game 2-1 at Parkhead.

The champions looked hungover at times as Barry Nicholson and Gary Dempsey crashed home goals either side of Henrik Larsson's 37th goal of the season.

The celebrations have been in full swing since winning the title a fortnight ago and Celtic would have gone ahead within the first six minutes had it not been for a brilliant reflex save from departing Dunfermline goalkeeper Derek Stillie.

An experimental Rangers side thrashed Motherwell 4-0 at Ibrox thanks to a 10-minute goal spree either side of half-time.

Rangers took the lead when Mikel Arteta converted a free-kick on the stroke of half-time.

Then after the restart substitute Maurice Ross, Hamed Namouchi and Steven Thompson all helped themselves to quick-fire additions as McLeish enjoyed an encouraging glimpse into the Gers' future.

Hearts ended Dundee United's 11-game unbeaten home run and tightened their grip on third place with a 2-0 win on Tayside.

Mark de Vries struck in the fourth minute, capitalising on an unsightly mix-up between defender Chris Innes and goalkeeper Paul Gallacher.

Andy Webster added the second after 72 minutes, again the beneficiary of some poor home defending.

Derek Riordan's 18th goal of the season gave Hibernian a 1-0 win over Dundee at Easter Road.

Three minutes before the break, the Scotland Under-21 international was handily placed to knock a Kevin Nicol shot into the net from close range.

Colin Nish scored twice and Mark Canning and Gary McSwegan also found the net as Kilmarnock came from behind to surprise Livingston 4-2 at Rugby Park.

Lee Makel and Burton O'Brien had put Livingston 2-0 up at the break but the Ayrshire side hit back sensationally in the second half.

Goals from James Grady and Jamie Mitchell allowed Partick Thistle to beat Aberdeen 2-0 in a battle between the SPL's bottom two clubs.

The Jags had the best of the chances from the outset and they made their pressure pay off when Grady grabbed the lead after just nine minutes.

They left it late to secure the win and it was Grady who turned provider to set up Mitchell for the second goal with just 10 minutes to go.

Dundee Utd 0 Hearts 2, Hibernian 1 Dundee 0, Kilmarnock 4 Livingston 2, Partick Thistle 2 Aberdeen 0, Rangers 4 Motherwell 0, Celtic 1 Dunfermline 2.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1Celtic	**35**	**29**	**4**	**2**	**101**	**23**	**91**
2Rangers	35	24	6	5	73	29	78
3Hearts	35	16	11	8	50	37	59
4Dunfermline	35	14	11	10	40	44	53
5Motherwell	35	12	9	14	39	44	45
6Dundee United	35	11	10	14	42	56	43
7Hibernian	35	10	11	14	38	54	41
8Livingston	35	9	12	14	42	52	39
9Kilmarnock	35	11	5	19	45	70	38
10Dundee	35	9	10	16	42	56	37
11Aberdeen	35	9	7	19	38	56	34
12Partick	35	5	6	24	33	62	21

French Ligue I

Jose Cobos of Nice (left) challenges for the ball with Monaco's Fernando Morientes.

Lyon missed the chance to move four points clear at the top of Ligue 1 as they were held to a 1-1 draw away at mid-table Bordeaux.

Vikash Dhorasoo scored in the 87th minute to salvage a draw after Marovane Chamakh had put the home side in front on the hour-mark.

Monaco kept their Ligue 1 ambitions alive with a precious 2-1 victory at neighbours Nice.

Defender Cedric Varrault rewarded Nice domination with a 10th minute opener however Croatia's Dado Prso levelled the scores from a cross by Edouard Cisse in the 35th minute.

Prso has been in quality form for Monaco this year and his presence was an bonus for the side.

In the dying seconds of the first half, captain Ludovic Giuly scored a masterpiece of a goal when he deflected with the tip of his foot a long through ball from Argentine Hugo Ibarra into goal.

Paris St Germain lost vital ground to the leaders after they could only manage a goalless draw at struggling Strasbourg in a game that saw both sides reduced to 10 men.

The Parisians' chances were hampered by the dismissal of Lorik Cana while Pascal Camadini was also show the red-card in the final minute for a second bookable offence.

The odds do not look good for Le Mans avoiding relegation but they boosted their hopes with a 2-1 win over fifth-placed Auxerre.

Auxerre defender Jean-Alain Boumsong headed into his own net before Daniel Cousin doubled the lead on the half-hour mark.

French international Djibril Cisse got one back for Auxerre but that's how it finished.

Sochaux played at the Stade Bonal for the first time since last month's Coupe de la Ligue trophy triumph and celebrated in style with a 3-1 win over Montpellier.

A second-half equaliser from Julien Cardy sealed an impressive point for Toulouse in the 1-1 draw at Lens and ensures the southern club avoid slipping into the relegation zone.

AC Ajaccio missed the chance to leave the relegation zone following a dour goalless draw with Guingamp, who will now feel more confident of preserving their Ligue 1 status.

Swiss striker Alexander Frei scored twice and set up the other two goals as Rennes destroyed 10-man Bastia 4-0 with a powerful display that takes the Bretons 10th in the table.

Marseille warmed up for Thursday night's UEFA Cup semi-final clash against Newcastle with a disappointing 0-1 home defeat to Metz with Medhi Meniri scoring the only goal of the match.

Frederic Da Rocha scored twice for Nantes as Les Canaris defeated 10-man Lille 2-0 at La Beaujoire to keep their hopes of European football alive.

Nice 1 Monaco 2, Ajaccio 0 Guingamp 0, Le Mans 2 Auxerre 1, Lens 1 Toulouse 1, Marseille 0 Metz 1, Nantes 2 Lille 0, Rennes 4 Bastia 0, Sochaux 3 Montpellier 1, Strasbourg 0 Paris St Germain 0, Bordeaux 1 Lyon 1.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1Lyon	**34**	**21**	**7**	**6**	**58**	**24**	**70**
2Monaco	34	19	11	4	54	25	68
3PSG	34	19	10	5	47	25	67
4Sochaux	34	17	9	8	50	35	60
5Auxerre	34	17	6	11	53	31	57
6Nantes	34	15	8	11	43	32	53
7Marseille	34	16	5	13	47	40	53
8Bordeaux	34	12	11	11	34	35	47
9Lens	34	13	8	13	28	42	47
10Rennes	34	12	9	13	48	42	45
11Nice	34	10	14	10	36	34	44
12Lille	34	12	8	14	36	36	44
13Metz	34	10	8	16	29	36	38
14Bastia	34	9	11	14	33	45	38
15Strasbourg	34	9	10	15	41	49	37
16Guingamp	34	10	7	17	32	50	37
17Toulouse	34	8	10	16	28	41	34
18Ajaccio	34	8	9	17	28	51	33
19Mans	34	7	10	17	27	51	31
20Montpellier	34	8	5	21	37	65	29

Dutch Eredivisie

Wesley Sonck: The Ajax forward struck a quick-fire hat-trick for champions-elect.

Wesley Sonck cracked a second-half hat-trick as Ajax inched closer to the Eredivisie title with a 5-0 win at FC Zwolle.

The leaders were far from their fluent best but the result was never in doubt once Tomas Galasek gave them the lead nine minutes before half-time.

Sonck then took centre stage with a wonderful display which powered Ajax to their 23rd win in 32 league games this season.

Wesley Sneijder also got in on the act, netting Ajax's fourth, shortly before Sonck completed his treble.

PSV Eindhoven recorded a 5-0 thrashing of their own, away to Volendam.

Andre Ooijer opened the scoring and John De Jong and Mateja Kezman both scored twice, which means Ajax still need a point from their final two games to take the title.

Third-placed Feyenoord are six points adrift of PSV after their surprise 2-1 home defeat by Groningen.

The Rotterdam club took the lead in the 56th minute through Dirk Kuijt but the visitors hit back with a late Martin Drent double to claim a first ever win at the De Kuip Stadion.

Vitesse Arnhem took a step towards pulling themselves out of the bottom three as they drew 2-2 with arch rivals NEC.

The home side took the lead after 53 minutes through Nicky Hofs but their advantage was not to last long, substitute Youssouf Hersi drawing the visitors level after 76 minutes.

Hersi gifted NEC the advantage on 84 minutes before Hofs bagged his second to rescue a point.

RKC Waalwijk edged a mid-table scrap with a 1-0 victory over Dutch Cup finalists FC Utrecht.

Rick Hoogendorp scored the only goal of the game, converting from close range after being set up Patrick van Diemen.

AZ Alkmaar threw away a two-goal lead and had to settle for a point against NAC Breda - but Co Adriaanse's men are still in pole position for a place in next season's UEFA Cup.

Martijn Meerdink and Denny Landzaat put AZ in charge by half-time, but Ali Boussaboun and Anouar Diba were both on target in the second period to seal a useful point for the visitors.

ADO Den Haag boosted their chances of avoiding the drop with a hard-fought 1-0 win over Heerenveen.

Robert Maaskant saw at close hand the potential of Willem II after watching his future employers crush his current side 3-0. Maaskant will take over at Willem in the summer.

A goal eight minutes from time from Brazilian striker Cristiano helped Roda JC to a 2-1 win at FC Twente.

Den Haag 1 Heerenveen 0, AZ Alkmaar 2 NAC Breda 2, Twente 1 Roda JC 2, Willem II 3 RBC Roosendaal 0, Zwolle 0 Ajax 5, Volendam 0 PSV Eidnhoven 5, Feyenoord 1 Groningen 2, RKC Waalwijk 1 Utrecht 0, Vitesse 2 NEC Nijmegen 2.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1Ajax	**32**	**23**	**5**	**4**	**72**	**29**	**74**
2PSV	32	21	5	6	85	26	68
3Feyenoord	32	18	8	6	60	36	62
4Alkmaar	32	17	6	9	63	37	57
5Heerenveen	32	16	7	9	44	33	55
6Roda	32	13	10	9	56	39	49
7Willem II	32	13	9	10	45	49	48
8Twente	32	14	2	16	51	50	44
9Utrecht	32	12	7	13	40	49	43
10NAC	32	11	10	11	53	50	43
11Roosendaal	32	10	10	12	32	41	40
12Waalwijk	32	10	9	13	41	47	39
13Groningen	32	9	9	14	36	49	36
14NEC	32	10	3	19	42	57	33
15Den Haag	32	8	7	17	30	57	31
16Zwolle	32	5	10	17	26	60	25
17Vitesse	32	3	16	13	36	54	25
18Volendam	32	6	5	21	28	77	23

SOCCER NSW

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Strikers shut down

By Paul Goodwin

A ninety minute defensive war saw both the Penrith and Central Coast strikers repeatedly shut-down in their attempts to break what became an enthralling deadlock at Pluim Park.

Jason Connolly was back to lead the Penrith attack and met his match in Coasties defender Sean Matthews, who put a stranglehold on the Panthers' striker all night.

Central Coast fired the first real salvo of the game when, in the 13th minute, they won a free-kick from 25-yards out. But Peter Haynes drove his shot against the crossbar with keeper Chad Taylor seemingly beaten.

Three minutes later the whistle blew after Connolly appeared to head in a free-kick swung over from the left by Peter Bennett. Penrith supporters seemed to think their side had taken the lead but the ball had been handled and not headed into the net by the Penrith man who earned a yellow card for his trouble.

The second-half again saw the Coast team containing Connolly whose chief support came from Bennett and Wawi and some good moves forward from Marty McCaffery and Sciberras.

Coast captain, Marc Falzon, nodded a free kick from Doug West just over the bar in the 84th as the two teams stepped up their attacking pressure.

The game swung wildly from end to end as the precious win both teams sought became more and more elusive.

CENTRAL COAST UNITED 0
PENRITH PANTHERS 0
at Cook Park, St Marys.

CENTRAL COAST UNITED: Matthew Trott, David Brewer, Sean Matthews, Beau Busch, Matt Mitchell, Daniel Sunridge (Doug West 60), John Bennis, Mitchell Daley, Marc Falzon (C), Nathan Byrn (Ben Murrell 78), Peter Haynes
Sub not used: RGK Ben Xerri, Robert Russell and Gareth Jenkins
Coach: Jim Foley

PENRITH PANTHERS: Chad Taylor, Daniel Wells, Daniel McCann, Marty McCaffery (Danny Hinton 80), Alan Wawi, Luke O'Connell (C), Luke Boyd, Peter Bennett, Jason Sciberras (Paul Marosevic 78), Roger Galayini (Adam Anderson 65), Jason Connolly
Subs not used: RGK Kurt Van Arkels, Michael Noro
Coach: Tony Rasmussen

Referee: Nick Asargiotis
Assistant Referees: David Moore and Peter Koelma
Fourth Official: Chris Attrill

Borg boots a winner

By Paul Goodwin

Bonnyrigg White Eagles	mr.mobile	0
Bankstown City Lions	HYUNDAI	1

Matthew Borg has again saved the day for Bankstown, handing them a victory over the weekend with a scorching 18-yard strike.

With his goal Borg not only assured a finals berth for Bankstown, but also put another goal between himself and Ilija Prenzoski in the hunt for the Golden Boot.

Bonnyrigg, however, will be playing for pride next week against new League-leaders Belconnen after going down in their last home game of the season to Borg's 89th minute goal.

Both sides struggled to finish with a goal in the first-half as a number of mid-field raids led to nothing.

Robbie Gomez for Bankstown and Sam Larocca for Bonnyrigg traded creative midfield movement and both looked dangerous on the ball. But at half-time the sides were still locked together with neither having troubled the scoreboard attendant.

Spectators had less than a minute to settle in to their seats for the second-half when Bonnyrigg's best chance of the match was saved by Zlatko Josevski in superb fashion.

A pin-point header by Jimmy Aschner was pushed over the cross bar. Josevski had appeared beaten and Bonnyrigg spectators were cheering already when the very nimble and very much in-form Josevski amazingly dived backwards into the air to save the ball from going into the net.

From that point both sides traded blows until the 87th minute when Vuko Tomasevic laid a ball off to young Dalibor Drca whose shot just went wide.

Bankstown then took their chance in the dying minutes when Matthew Borg swooped onto a loose ball and drilled one from about 18 yards to win the game for The Lions, with his partner Sean Babic laying on the pass once again.

Paul Wearne only managed to come on for half an hour of the game For Bankstown, while polished defender Milan Bosnar was missing, as was creative midfielder Anthony Doumanis.

Once again veteran Saso Boskovski stepped into the breach and did not put a foot wrong while Steve Liavas, so often called on from the bench, had a full game and worked his socks off.

BONNYRIGG WHITE EAGLES 0
BANKSTOWN CITY LIONS 1
(M Borg 90')
at Serbian Centre, Bonnyrigg

BONNYRIGG WHITE EAGLES: Cem Akili, Alex Canak, Mark D'Alessandro, Taytun Devrimol, Shane Knight (C), Greg Collins, Sam Larocca, Brad Groves, Vuko Tomasevic, Aaron Burgess (Milorad Simonovic), Jimmy Aschner (Dalibor Drca)
Subs not used: RGK Ali Akbal and George Radmanovic, Dejan Malenica
Coach: Gordon Brown

BANKSTOWN CITY LIONS: Zlatko Josevski, Richard Luksic (C), Alex Trpkoski (Paul Wearne 60), Sasha Trajcevski, Saso Boskovski, Steve Liavas, George Nohra, Robbie Gomez (Phil Hartshorn 78), Marc Hoenselaars, Sean Babic, Matt Borg
Subs not used: RGK Ivan Kovacevic, Paul Medulla
Coach: Andy Papoulias

"The result that sums up our season": Langan

By Greg Stock

Rockdale City Suns	KOSHA POLISH	3
A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt Tigers	Continental	1

Rockdale City Suns nabbed their first win in six weeks as over a dismal A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt side to at Seymour Shaw Park.

Unfortunately the win came three weeks too late for the hapless Suns who had their faint semi-final chances snuffed out last weekend by the Central Coast.

A solid opening half-hour from the home side set up the win when they scored twice, and could have had two or three more with a little luck. A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt coach Les De Celis pulled a pre-game selection coup when he started goalkeeper Brad Swancott following a knee injury that had sidelined the former Newcastle Breakers star for two months.

Wearing more strapping than a race-horse, his lack of match practice saw him at fault for the first goal when he dropped a looping header from Harry James in the 23rd minute. Swancott seemed to hit his hands on the crossbar at the same time as the ball, spilling it to the feet of James who found the empty net with relative ease.

Seven minutes later he was caught slightly out of position when Alilovic broke through and hit what seemed like an innocuous side footed shot goal-ward. Unsighted until the final moment, Swancott mistimed his dive and all of a sudden the Suns boasted a 2-0 lead.

A.P.I.A. did come back into the match strongly and exerted some good pressure on Rockdale in the later stages of the first-half, but an inability to consistently stretch the Suns stifled their comeback. Damon Langan scored their only goal from the penalty spot in the 34th minute after Peter Apolevski strangely dived in at Andrew Clark when he was holed up on the by-line.

Some perplexing decisions from referee Ray Issac also had fans of both persuasions seething as he turned away two further pleas for penalties, but allowed the Suns one when Denis Alilovic was sandwiched between defenders in the 77th minute. Alilovic capped off a man-of-the-match performance when he had a shot cleared off the line a couple of minutes later after beating three defenders and turning his marker nicely.

"It's this sort of result that sums up our season," A.P.I.A. skipper Damon Langan said, "we play well in patches but concede a couple of sloppy goals through poor defending and we get punished."

While both sides are out of the race for the top five there were a number of cameo performances sure to stick in the minds of both coaches for next season. While James and Alilovic were exceptional for the winners, James Monie and substitute Zlatko Arambasic made key contributions for the visitors.

The final comment of the match was left to James who will return to Wollongong Olympic following next weekends clash with Crescent Star.

"We wanted to send our fans out happy with a win and we achieved that. It has been a case of what might have been for us this year, but we wanted to win a game at Seymour Shaw for them and we did" he said.

ROCKDALE CITY SUNS 3
(H James 23', D Alilovic 30', 77 pen)
A.P.I.A. LEICHHARDT TIGERS 1
(D Langan 34' pen)
at Seymour Shaw Park, Miranda

ROCKDALE CITY SUNS: Trinity Allen, Richard Plesa, Ante Juric, Joe Moric, Peter Apolevski, Harry James, Ivan Bosnar, Ante Moric, Tony Ju, Denis Alilovic, Goce Trposki
Coach: Ivan Petkovic.

A.P.I.A.-LEICHHARDT TIGERS: Brad Swancott, Damon Langan (John-Paul Boutros), Paul Dee, David Barratt, Robbie Hooker (Zlatko Arambasic), Andrew Clark, Robbie Stanton, Paul Bilokapic, Jeremy Brown (Tony Tesoro), Denis Alilovic, James Monie
Coach: Les De Celis.

Referee: Ray Issac

WRITERS: Greg Stock, Paul Goodwin, Aimee Brown
PRODUCTION: Mary Quartly
EDITOR: Dylan Welch
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF: Kyle Patterson
PHOTOGRAPHY: Carlos Furtado
● *All information is courtesy of SOCCER NSW*

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NSW PREMIER LEAGUE

Saints stumble...

St George Saints	1
Blacktown City Demons	4

By Greg Stock

The Saints charge for their first Premiership trophy since 1983 suffered a nosedive on Saturday night with their third straight defeat, this time 4-1 to a rampaging Blacktown City.

The Demons set up the win with a powerful opening half in which they scored all four goals in just over thirty minutes, spending the rest of the evening frustrating a shocked Saints side that has surrendered their lead at the top of the table to Belconnen.

St George coach Manny Spanoudakis made two key changes to his starting line-up leaving Bruno Beddoni on the bench and preferring second-string goalkeeper Phil Weston to Richard Patrizi for reasons of form.

The latter move backfired badly on Spanoudakis as the Demons seized a two-goal initiative inside fifteen minutes from errors by Weston.

Weston was all at sea in front of a relentless Blacktown strike force conceding the first goal when he dropped a free kick from Tony Faria into the path of Kwasnik at the back post, the second when he came outside his penalty box to attempt a clearance. Instead of hitting the ball first time, he strangely tried to control it succeeding only in stumbling into his own defender and giving Kwasnik an empty net to work with.

Hard head: Mendez's send-off for two altercations may see him suspended for up to three matches

While the third goal to Luke Roodenburg in the 19th minute was a well taken left-foot strike, the Saints defensive frailties were again on display for goal four when the normally reliable Zelic turned the ball over meekly to Joshua Maguire well inside his own half. The quick-thinking midfielder firing a well-weighted pass to Mark Milligan who rattled a shot home passed a well-beaten Weston.

The home side did give themselves some hope for a second-half revival when Ante Deur met a short cross from Stuart Young at the near post to lob John Crawley, but even with the lions' share of possession and territory they could make no significant inroads.

Blacktown got numbers behind the ball at every opportunity to stifle the normally free flowing St George attack, with Damien Foxe doing a magnificent job to keep Stuart Young in check.

Their inability to find an opening in the Demons' defence added to their frustration and it boiled over late in the game with skipper Gabriel Mendez being sent off for two reckless tackles in two minutes.

The Formeroo sparked a physical altercation between the two sides when he clashed with Maguire in the 83rd minute, earning the ire of referee Greg Leverton and then proceeded to clash physically with Maguire on his way back to the dressing room.

"That incident was regrettable but it all came from a poor first-half in which we conceded four goals," St George coach Manny Spanoudakis said, "we had seven or eight guys who did not turn up to play and as a team you can't carry that many poor performers and expect to be competitive."

While his team did fight back strongly in the second-half, his decision to leave ace goal scorer Bruno Beddoni on the bench until the 74th minute was perplexing.

The move of partnering Stuart Young with Ante Deur did look promising when Deur netted a first-half goal, but his lack of height and ability to hold the ball up under pressure in the second were a major weakness.

Bowled over: Stuart Young (right) hits the ground during the match which saw St George surrended their Premier League lead

In the Blacktown rooms, coach Brian Brown was understandably happy with the performance and the growing momentum his side has leading into the final series.

"It was an important win for us tonight after the disappointment of last Wednesday night," Brown said, "we scored a couple of goals early to settle us down but I was very happy with our finishing for the third and fourth goals. That was exceptional and I was delighted to get a win against a top side like St George."

While Blacktown still remains in the running for third spot, all eyes are on St George in their final game against Bankstown. After three losses on the trot St George will need to rely on Bonnyrigg to take some points from Belconnen next weekend and beat the Lions themselves, not an easy assignment when you are zero and three over the last few weeks.

Leap-frogging: Blacktown's Tony Faria leaps over an unsuspecting Simon Verrender

ST GEORGE SAINTS 1
(A Deur 42')
BLACKTOWN CITY DEMONS 4
(A Kwasnik 3', 14', L Roodenburg 19', M Milligan 32')
at St George Stadium, Rockdale

ST. GEORGE SAINTS: Phil Weston, Simon Verrender, Ivan Zelic (Bruno Beddoni 74'), Vince Savoca, Dean Culina, Adrian Webster (Christian Cevenini 55'), Raphael Bove, Gabriel Mendez, Ante Deur, Mirko Jurij, Stuart Young.
Coach: Manny Spanoudakis.

BLACKTOWN CITY DEMONS: John Crawley, Damien Foxe, Ben Willard, Patrick Gatt, Joshua Maguire (Brian Vanega 85'), Kain Rastall, Luke Roodenburg, Paul Karbon, Tony Faria, Adam Kwasnik, Mark Milligan.
Coach: Brian Brown.

Yellow Cards: Kwasnik (BCD) 28' Savoca (STG) 28' Maguire (BCD) 30' Webster (STG) 43' Deur (STG) 70' Beddoni (STG) 78' Milligan (BCD) 80' Mendez (STG) 81' 83'
Red Card: Mendez (STG) 83'
Referee: Greg Leverton
Assistant Referees: Mark Nemorin and Tomasz Posiewka
Fourth Official: Atila Stibinger

...and Belconnen take the lead

Sydney Crescent Star	0
Belconnen Blue Devils	1

By Paul Goodwin

Belconnen overran a sluggish Crescent Star side to put an end to the Saint's reign over the Premier League, leap-frogging St George with only a week to go until finals time.

Crescent took time to get going, but as the game wore on they applied themselves to the defending task in hand. They slowed the game down enough to give themselves a chance of picking up the single point they needed to guarantee themselves Premier League finals' football for the first time.

They fell behind to a goal in the 15th minute from Alex Castro who was there in the box to steer home a ball laid back at the far post by Daniel Macor after a corner from the left had been swung in by Nic Purdue.

Hakan Sevgin created the first chance of the game for Crescent Star in the fourth minute when he got away quickly down the right only to send over a far too powerful low cross that eluded the late arriving Tolgay Ozbey in the middle by a few inches. It could have been the early breakthrough that would have set the side up nicely.

(continued on page 19)

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FIRST GRADE RESULTS & TABLES

Rockdale City Suns 3
(H James 23', D Alilovic 30', 77' pen)
Bonnyrigg White Eagles 0

St George Saints 1
(A Deur 42')
Central Coast United 0
Sydney Crescent Star 0

Canterbury-Marrickville 0

A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt Tigers 1
(D Langan 34' pen)
Bankstown City Lions 1
(M Borg 90')
Blacktown City Demons 4
(A Kwasnik 9', 14'; L Roodenburg 19', M Milligan 32')
Penrith Panthers 0
Belconnen Blue Devils 1
(A Castro 15')
Parramatta Eagles 1
(P Downs 70')

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pts
Belconnen Blue Devils	21	13	5	3	44	25	19	44
St George Saints	21	14	2	5	44	27	17	44
Bankstown City Lions	21	12	2	7	40	31	9	38
Blacktown City Demons	21	11	3	7	45	25	20	36
Sydney Crescent Star	21	9	5	7	26	19	7	32
Penrith Panthers	21	9	3	9	25	36	-11	30
Rockdale City Suns	21	7	6	8	32	36	-4	27
Parramatta Eagles	21	7	5	9	30	31	-1	26
Bonnyrigg White Eagles	21	7	2	12	32	36	-4	23
A.P.I.A. Leichhardt Tigers	21	6	3	12	22	36	-14	21
Central Coast United	21	5	4	12	25	45	-20	19
Canterbury Marrickville	21	4	4	13	25	43	-18	16

GRADE 20 RESULTS & TABLES

Rockdale City Suns 1
(T Panuccio 36')
Bonnyrigg White Eagles 4
(D Malenica 11', M Sartoretto 21, D Malenica 31', D Drca 33')
St George Saints 3
(K Saterdag 33', V Milicevic 44', G Lagoudakis 81')
Central Coast United 4
(T Quilty 52', 69', 82', 87')
Sydney Crescent Star 1
(E Turk 79')
Canterbury-Marrickville 1
(D Di Mento 70')

A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt Tigers 4
(B Jenke 13', 33', 74', 79')
Bankstown City Lions 2
(J Anevski 9', A Hadzic 69')
Blacktown City Demons 2
(B Stephan 58', D Hokin 70')
Penrith Panthers 1
(T O'Connell 70')
Belconnen Blue Devils 1
(A Castro 15')
Parramatta Eagles 4
(D Mercuri 10' og, B Gough 26', A Kabbara 36', A Diles 43')

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pts
Parramatta Eagles	21	15	3	3	44	10	34	48
A.P.I.A. Leichhardt Tigers	21	15	3	3	48	17	31	48
Bonnyrigg White Eagles	21	13	5	3	49	29	20	44
Penrith Panthers	21	9	4	8	36	30	6	31
Blacktown City Demons	21	8	4	9	35	31	4	28
Belconnen Blue Devils	21	7	6	8	26	26	0	27
Central Coast United	21	5	8	8	29	32	-3	23
Bankstown City Lions	21	6	5	10	23	46	-23	23
Canterbury Marrickville	21	6	4	11	34	49	-15	22
St George Saints	21	5	5	11	27	37	-10	20
Rockdale City Suns	21	4	6	11	24	53	-29	18
Sydney Crescent Star	21	4	5	12	21	36	-15	17

NEXT ROUND 22

FIRST GRADE

HOME TEAM		AWAY TEAM	DATE	KICK-OFF	GROUND
Central Coast United	v	A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt Tigers	Sat. 8th May	7.30pm	Pluim Park
Belconnen Blue Devils	v	Bonnyrigg White Eagles	Sat. 8th May	7.00pm	McKellar Soccer Centre
Blacktown City Demons	v	Canterbury-Marrickville	Sat. 8th May	7.00pm	Gabbie Stadium
Penrith Panthers	v	Parramatta Eagles	Sat. 8th May	7.30pm	Cook Park (St Marys)
Sydney Crescent Star	v	Rockdale City Suns	Sun. 9th May	3.00pm	Lidcombe Oval
Bankstown City Lions	v	St George Saints	Sun. 9th May	3.00pm	Jensen Park

GRADE 20

HOME TEAM		AWAY TEAM	DATE	KICK-OFF	GROUND
Central Coast United	v	A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt Tigers	Sat. 8th May	5.30pm	Pluim Park
Belconnen Blue Devils	v	Bonnyriggh White Eagles	Sat. 8th May	4.30pm	McKellar Soccer Centre
Blacktown City Demons	v	Canterbury-Marrickville	Sat. 8th May	5.00pm	Gabbie Stadium
Penrith Panthers	v	Parramatta Eagles	Sat. 8th May	5.30pm	Cook Park (St Marys)
Sydney Crescent Star	v	Rockdale City Suns	Sun. 9th May	1.00pm	Lidcombe Oval
Bankstown City Lions	v	St George Saints	Sun. 9th May	1.00pm	Jensen Park

LEADING GOALSCORERS

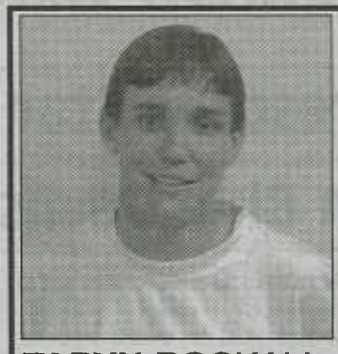
Sunday 2 May 2004

19	Matthew Borg (BCL)
17	Ilija Prenzoski (BBD)
13	Bruno Beddoni (SG)
12	Daniel Macor (BBD)
11	Denis Alilovic (RCS)
10	Steve Karavatakis (CMO/RCS)
9	Jason Connolly (PP), Aaron Burgess (BWE)
8	Daniel Watkins (SG), Peter Haynes (CCU), Luke Roodenburg (BCD)
7	Nathan Byrn (CCU), Roger Galayini (PP), Sean Babic (BCL)
6	Anthony Galliozzi (BBD), Dominic McGill (BCD), Filip Marzec (SCS), Ante Deur (SG)
5	Norman Tome (AL), Tony Ju (RCS), Sam Larocca (CMO/BWE), Ben Deighan (RCS) Tolgay Ozbey (SCS), Jimmy Aschner (BWE), David Arranz (BBD), Mark Milligan (BCD), Adam Kwasnik (BCD)

NSW PREMIER LEAGUE TIPPING COLUMN

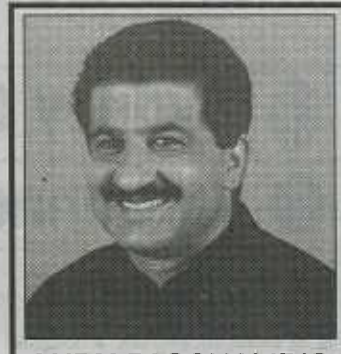
PAUL GOODWIN
SOCCER NSW JOURNALIST
CENTRAL COAST
BELCONNEN
BLACKTOWN
PARRAMATTA
DRAW
DRAW

Points = 45



TARYN ROCKALL
NSW SAPPHIRES CAPTAIN
DRAW
BELCONNEN
BLACKTOWN
PENRITH
ROCKDALE
BANKSTOWN

Points = 49



ANDY PASCHALIDIS
ELITE SPORTS TRAVEL
CENTRAL COAST
BONNYRIGG
CANTERBURY
PENRITH
ROCKDALE
ST GEORGE

Points = 47

GREG STOCK
SOCCER NSW JOURNALIST
CENTRAL COAST
BELCONNEN
BLACKTOWN
PENRITH
CRESCENT STAR
BANKSTOWN

Points = 50

'PEANUTS'
THE MONKEY
A.P.I.A
BELCONNEN
BLACKTOWN
PARRAMATTA
CRESCENT STAR
BANKSTOWN

Points = 47

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Would-be-kings shaken by Crescent

(continued from page 17)

Prior to taking the lead the Blue Devils had already gone close through the busy Alex Castro while Danny Macor also had a good chance to open his account only to slip inside the box with the ball close to his feet and the keeper Wojtek Zarzycki was able to nip in and throw himself on the loose ball before any damage could be done.

That 31st minute scare for the Star defence was one of the few times they had looked really vulnerable as the visitors appeared short of ideas.

Ozbey went closest for Crescent Star in the 60th minute when his low shot from 25-yards was pushed away by Tony Giannasca who saw the ball late as it took a deviation on the pitch.

At the other end Mike Katz was not thinking too clearly when he advanced on goal and appeared set to face the keeper alone and could have tried for goal but elected to pass when his own chances of scoring appeared far brighter.

This was in the 68th and there was a further chance for the home side soon after this when Ozbey sprinted down the left flank and got to the by-line only to see his own cross, this time, elude Sevgin whose timing let him down as he made his way into the box.

Macor hit the side netting for Belconnen in the 70th while Prenzoski had an effort that cleared the bar with ease in the 75th.

The locals' other chance of an uneventful game came in the 71st when Ozbey played yet another good ball into the box and big defender Michael Cindric arrived almost on the goal line to sky the ball over the bar, much to the dismay of the home supporters and to the relief of the Blue Devils.

The game ended with Belconnen hanging on nervously to their precious 1-0 win without any great conviction. Hardly the ideal preparation for their last home game: which could seal the Minor Premiership for them next weekend.

SYDNEY CRESCENT STAR 0

BELCONNEN BLUE DEVILS 1
(A Castro 15')
at Lidcombe Oval, Auburn

SYDNEY CRESCENT STAR: Wojtek Zarzycki, Evangelos Petralos, Askin Oygur, Michael Cindric, Ugur Tokdogan, Gokce Oncu (Juan Arango 46), Terry Atses, Yavus Ekinci (C), Daniel Willoughby, Hakan Sevgin, Tolgay Ozbey
Subs not used: RGK Erkan Aydin, Mustafa Akca, Adam Kir, Ersin Avni
Coach: Yasin Ozdenak

BELCONNEN BLUE DEVILS: Tony Giannasca, Adrian Dowling, Patrick Lloyd, Lee Pietrukowski, Nic Purdue, Toplica Popovich, Michael Katz, Elliot Zwangobani, Alex Castro, Ilija Prenzoski (Adam Williams 77), Daniel Macor (Anthony Gallozzi 79)
Subs not used: RGK Jimmy Carr, Matt Valen, David Brouwer
Coach: Chris Tanzey

Referee: Simon Micallef
Assistant Referees: Gareth Askham and Richard Keep
Fourth Official: Jim Nicolaou
Yellow Cards: Nil

Relegation bullet aimed at Berries

By Greg Stock

Canterbury-Marrickville		0
Parramatta Eagles		1

Canterbury's chances of staying in the new-look Premier League next season suffered a major blow at the hands of Parramatta Eagles on Sunday afternoon.

Their 1-0 loss - and the Coasts' draw against Penrith - has left them with everything to do next weekend if they are to continue in the elite summer competition for another year.

While the Berries again self destructed in front of their home fans, all eyes were on a solid second-half performance from Eagles substitute midfielder Paul Downs. In a game that lacked any real imagination, Downs injected himself into the game with great enthusiasm just after the hour mark, scoring a brilliant goal from just inside the penalty box and showing the way for his side that have won four of their last five matches.

"He is a very promising young player," Eagles coach Trevor Morgan said, "his goal was a well-taken strike that really lifted the team, and he showed some great enthusiasm in the last half-hour that helped swing the game our way."

Downs' goal was beautiful to watch, hitting a cross from Ismael Arrarte on the volley with his left foot. The ball travelled only a matter of inches above the ground, beating goalkeeper Bob Catlin for pace and nestling neatly in the bottom left-hand corner.

Outside of the match winner there were few bright moments in a game that again raised the spotlight on the quality of the Henson Park pitch.

Players from both sides expressed their displeasure at the surface which produced inconsistent bounce and a number of bare patches making ball control a real gamble. Both teams struggled to put more than four or five passes together, lessening the opportunities to provide any real spectator interest.

"It's our home ground but it's a real struggle when we play on pitches like that," Berries striker Steve Karavatakis said, "it makes it almost impossible to play through the midfield or put more than two or three passes together."

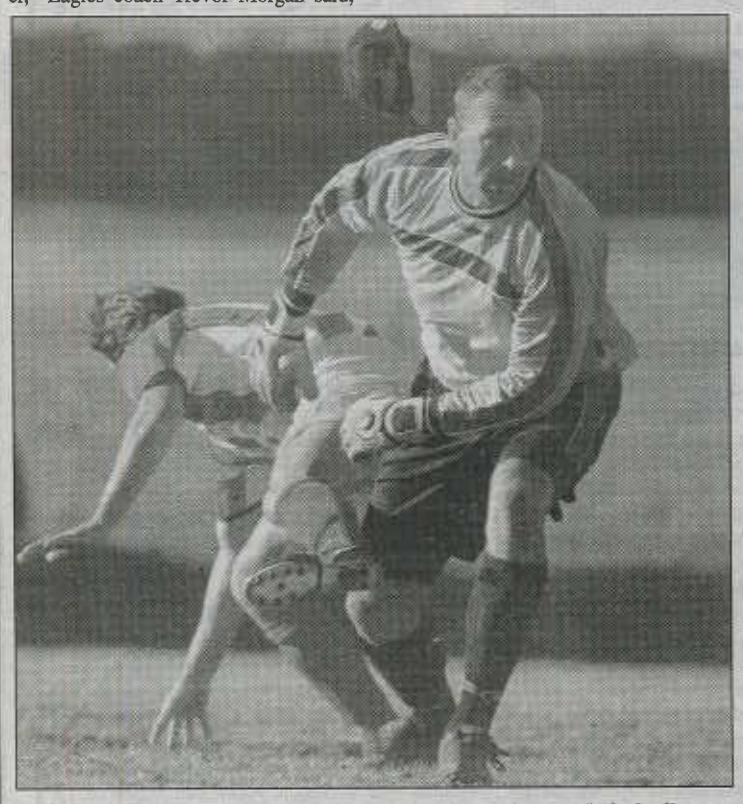
Eagles coach Trevor Morgan agreed. "It's a very difficult pitch to try and play good football on. It's not conducive to good football so we had to adapt our technique to try and deal with the situation."

The three points has lifted Parramatta to eighth, and just six points behind fifth spot, a position thought unattainable some eight weeks ago when in the midst of a five game losing streak.

"We reassessed our position halfway through the season and thought what do we want to achieve from the rest of the year," Morgan said, "our main aim was obviously to avoid relegation but the improvement we have shown in the last five weeks has been promising and sets us up nicely for next season."

By contrast, Canterbury's season of disappointments builds to an exciting climax against Blacktown City at the Gabbie next Saturday night. Nothing but a win will be good enough to keep them in next season's League.

Back-up: Ben Price keeps the Eagles at bay as Catlin clears



Keep your hat on: Canterbury coach and goal keeper Bob Catlin as his work-cut out for him next week after the loss to Parramatta

CANTERBURY-MARRICKVILLE ...0
PARRAMATTA EAGLES 1
(P Down 70')
at Henson Park, Marrickville

CANTERBURY-MARRICKVILLE: Bob Catlin, Cormack Begley, Sasa Ubesenovic, George Souris, Alan Picken, Paul Bourke (David Harding), John Kyriazopoulos (Aheleas Kotsopoulos), Achileas Markopoulos (Morgan Cawley), Stuart Banks, Steve Karavatakis, Ben Price.
Coach: Bob Catlin.

PARRAMATTA EAGLES: Peter Munsie, Mark Reveley, Daniel Borg, John Kelso, Rod Hutchinson (Paul Downs), Ismael Arrarte, Anthony Mittiga, Matthew O'Shea (Michael Debono), Nathan Rivera (Matthew Rosier), Andy Kane, Matthew Clowes.
Coach: Trevor Morgan.

Referee: Alex Glasgow

Round 20

Eagles swoop on Saints

By Greg Stock

Another high-profile team fell to the Parramatta curse last Monday, with St George falling to a brazen Eagles attack.

The Saints defenders undid all the good work of their hardworking midfielders in a physical contest to allow the Eagles to score twice in five minutes early in the second-half to record just their sixth win of the season.

Without the services of the suspended Ivan Zelic, Saints boss Manny Spanoudakis elected to start Vince Savoca in preference to Dean Culina. While Savoca can not be blamed for either goal, the lack of mobility in defence down the left-hand side saw the Saints come unstuck at a crucial stage of the match.

Up 1-0 and coasting, they were rocked initially in the 47th minute when Ismael Arrarte sauntered down the left to the edge of the penalty box and let fly with a rocket that almost blew a hole in the net.

Some tardy tackling allowed Arrarte to push right through to the heart of the Saints defence from where he let fly.

Five minutes later the Eagles had taken the lead, this time it was Nathan Rivera who was the beneficiary of a cheap Saints turnover in the midfield.

Matthew Clowes raced down the left to fire in the pass to Rivera who was assisted by a clumsy save from St George goalkeeper Richard Patrizi. Patrizi got a hand to the shot only to see the ball bobble over meekly and into the net.

The Eagles were able to get men behind the ball and defend as if their lives depended on it. Bruno Beddoni and Stuart Young tried hard but everytime they were in possession, they were swamped by Eagles keen to keep the one goal advantage.

(continued page 23)

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ROUND 22 PREVIEW

WITH PAUL GOODWIN & GREG STOCK

Central Coast United vs A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt Tigers

Saturday 8th May at Pluim Park
Kick-off 7.30pm First Grade / 5.30pm Grade 20

It has been a disappointing season for both clubs involved in this 'dead rubber'.

With another lost game behind them at Seymour Shaw Park against Rockdale, where they were beaten comfortably 3-1 by the Suns, the Tigers need a big form reversal to make life hard for the home side and in the process give Canterbury a ghost of a chance in their last match this same night.

The Coast looked more than capable against Penrith Panthers yet could not strike a decent blow in front of goal.

That was how they only managed to collect one point and put themselves under pressure here.

Sean Matthews held the defence together superbly against a Jason Connolly-led attack last Saturday night.

David Brewer and improving young keeper Matthew Trott also did well so it will take a big effort from A.P.I.A. to unlock this defence, given that they have been shot-shy all season.

This is a chance for the Coast to complete a rare double, as they won at Lambert Park earlier in the season in one of their four upset away successes.

But the Coast team will be plagued by their lack of home form over the season - they have been consistently unable to convert their away form into victories for their fans at Pluim Park. Now will surely be the time for them to break the voodoo surrounding their poor home performances and give their fans something to cheer about.

Only once so far this term has the Coast managed a win at home and that was against Parramatta Eagles some weeks back.

Belconnen Blue Devils vs Bonnyrigg White Eagles

Saturday 8th May at McKellar Soccer Centre
Kick-Off 7.00pm First Grade / 4.30pm Grade 20

The jitters belonged to St George last weekend in a big way and it had been the same case a few weeks before as well.

Despite the apparent formality of this match no doubt the Blue Devils will get shaky themselves as they look down on the Saints from their lofty place atop the Premier League ladder.

Belconnen showed last week that they are far from comfortable with their top position in the League, barely surmounting a strong Crescent Star side.

The last time the sides met it was a 1-1 draw at the Serbian Centre and with Daniel Macor a little out of touch and Ilija Prenzoski looking at a disappointing second spot in the contest for the Golden Boot the pressure may again be on the rest of the team to come up with a winner here.

Bonnyrigg does not have much to play for here, on paper, but they do have some pride left to gather and, coming off two losses in a row in the League after progressing into next weekend's Continental Tyres Cup Final, they may be looking for a confidence boost here.

There is nothing wrong with the White Eagles' attacking force, as A.P.I.A. will attest, having been battered by them in that semi-final match, so Belconnen will need to be on their guard.

A draw would not be enough to ensure the title comes to Canberra so the leaders must win here to give St George a nigh impossible task the following day.

The tough defence and uncompromising midfield of the locals will have their work cut out containing the lively Bonnyrigg visitors so spectators should see an enthralling contest.

Penrith Panthers vs Parramatta Eagles

Saturday 8th May at Cook Park (St Marys)
Kick-Off 7.30pm First Grade / 5.30pm Grade 20

What a difference a month in football makes. Five weeks ago the Panthers were well entrenched in the top five and looking to consolidate that position.

One win from their past five outings has seen them crash out badly amid a hefty injury and suspension toll that limited coach Tony Rasmussen' ability to field his best eleven.

But results have given them a mathematical chance of sneaking back into fifth, providing they can knock over the Eagles and the Suns can beat Crescent Star on Sunday.

While the later may be a possibility the former could be a lot tougher than people think, as the Eagles are one of the form teams of the competition.

While Penrith have been struggling the Eagles have been blooming, winning four of their last five including their last three in a row.

Parramatta has made a name for themselves of late as David to their higher ranked Goliaths, and Penrith may end up being another scalp for the hungry Eagles.

"It has been a great season for learning and we have seen a lot of that lately," Eagles coach Trevor Morgan says, "We had a run there where we lost a number of games on end and that took its toll on the players and the club, but I have been very pleased with the way in which we have bounced back, easily avoiding relegation. It's now up to the boys to see if they can finish out the season on a winning note."

When both sides clashed at Melita Stadium earlier this season, both sides played out an entertaining draw. Parramatta scored through Andy Kane while the Panthers goal came from Alan Wawi.

Blacktown City Demons vs Canterbury-Marrickville

Saturday 8th May at Gabbie Stadium
Kick-Off 7.00pm First Grade / 5.00pm Grade 20

This game has consequences for both ends of the competition table with Blacktown chasing a top three spot and the double chance in the semi-final series, while Canterbury desperately need three points to stave off relegation.

The Demons made mince meat of the Saints in the first-half last Saturday night, racking up an impressive 4-1 win to go with their 5-0 walloping of Bonnyrigg the previous week.

Their attack has been in scintillating form and their defence has been rock solid, with goalkeeper John Crawley has only conceding one goal in the last three-three games.

Canterbury on the other hand has struggled for any real consistency through the second half of the season and stand on the edge of the relegation precipice. One win from their last eleven matches has them looking vulnerable and they'll need a huge change in form to keep the Demons at bay.

At stake is a place in next seasons new-look Premier League, and to have them miss out would be a huge disappointment to their long suffering fans. Fingers crossed they can turn the corner this week and put some pressure on the Coasties in their game against A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt at Pluim Park.

When they met earlier in the year at Henson Park, Blacktown defeated the Berries 4-1 with two goals to Luke Roodenburg, and one each to Tony Faria and Dominic Magill.

At least the teams can be thankful they are not playing at Henson Park, which did not get rave reviews from Berries players over the weekend.

Sydney Crescent Star vs Rockdale City Suns

Sunday 9th May at Lidcombe Oval
Kick-Off 3.00pm First Grade / 1.00pm Grade 20

This is another match with final five implications, but sadly for the Suns that doesn't include them.

Their season evaporated three weeks ago when the Coasties put them to the sword 3-1, but since then they have bounced back with a courageous 3-1 win over the struggling Tigers to set this match up as a real test of character. On paper at least they still appear dangerous but a lack of drive could be their obvious deficiency with nothing left to play for but pride.

Crescent Star may have won their way through to the Continental Tyres Cup final last week but their Lague season goes on the line in this match, a win guaranteeing them a spot in the top five. Anything but a win opens up the door for Penrith, should they be good enough to beat Parramatta Eagles on Saturday night.

Their 1-0 loss to Bankstown City last weekend leaves them three consecutive league matches without scoring a goal, their hopes resting in an enigmatic young eighteen-year-old named Tolgay Ozbey.

A former Sydney United junior Ozbey has scored in four of their last six wins meaning that if he scores, chances are Crescent Star can win.

Without midfield dynamo Filip Marzec and striker Orhan Dincer who has a chronic shoulder injury, it could be a case of last man standing for Crescent Star as their long injury list will test the depth of talent at Lidcombe Oval.

In their earlier round eleven clash, the match ended in an entertaining draw with Crescent Star opening the scoring with a header from Michael Cindric and Rockdale replying with a strike from Tony Ju.

Bankstown City Lions vs St George Saints

Sunday 9th May at Jensen Park
Kick-Off 3.00pm First Grade / 1.00pm Grade 20

Bankstown have a tough one to finish their season, meeting the hungry St George side.

Depending on the result of Saturday's game St George may be looking for a big win here. The magnitude of that win depends on how well Belconnen fare the previous night.

Bankstown, too, need to wrap up third spot with a win. Matt Borg leads by two in the race to the Golden Boot and his partners in crime, Marc Hoenselaars and Sean Babic, are bound to be fired up for this one.

With Borg leading the line and Bankstown's defence having kept four clean sheets in a row, things do not augur well for the St George attack of Bruno Beddoni and Stuart Young. Beddoni was left on the bench in the drubbing against Blacktown City, but it seems unlikely he will be again this time.

Skipper Gabriel Mendez will miss the game, having been sent off in his side's defeat at the hands of Blacktown last weekend.

Since wins are what both sides are almost certainly going to be after, and in the case of the Saints by a big margin, we can expect to see the newly-toughened Lions' defence fully stretched.

The Saints won the corresponding fixture earlier in the season with something to spare.

A huge crowd should be on hand to see if the home side can snare third spot or if the Saints can steal the title back from under the noses of the newly annointed Belconnen.

It is going to have all the fans whose sides played the previous night flocking to Jensen Park to find out for themselves.

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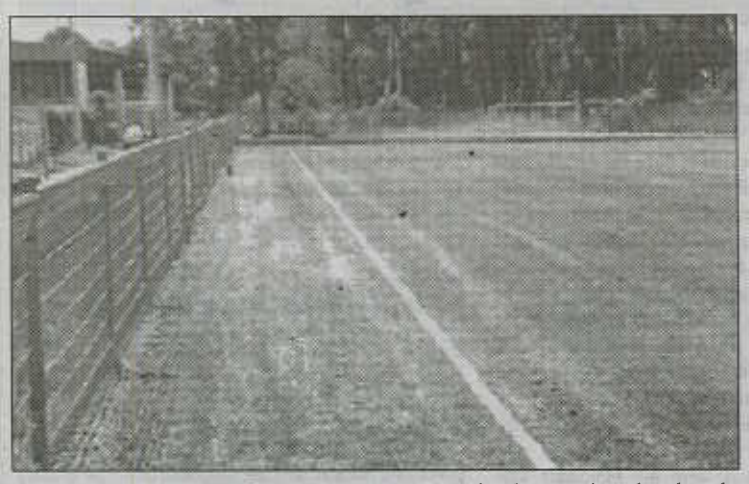
FROM THE SIDELINES

WITH GREG STOCK



Happy b'day Sharks

The Sutherland Sharks held their 75th anniversary dinner at the Cronulla Leagues Club the weekend before last, with over 240 attendees. Some of the special guests included Formeroos Johnny Watkiss, John Roche, Mike and John O'Shea as well as a host of former players and officials going right back to 1957.

The guest speaker was John Lambie, an ex Sharks player himself before going onto Rugby Union and becoming a Wallaby, while auctioneer, comedian and soccer guru Andy Paschalides was the guest auctioneer. Paschalades was able to lure $8,000 out of one former player for a signed David Beckham, Real Madrid shirt and another $4,000 for a signed Chelsea shirt. The night was an outstanding success for the club that also honoured their current first grade and youth teams as the Sharks of the future

Crescent charge

Crescent Star are riding the crest of a wave in their debut Premier League season having qualified for the Continental Cup Final, and look strong favourites to take one of the five semi-final spots on offer for the final series.

Coach Yasin Ozdenak has done an almighty job in getting them into this position after a long Winter Super League campaign last season saw them start their pre-season training some six weeks later than most other clubs.

History has also been against them with no Premier League club having ever made the semi-finals in their first season, but they have dug deep and look set to be a lot more than nuisance value if they qualify.

One of their favourite sons, Filip Marzec, has played his last game for the club, jetting out to Poland last Friday where he intends to permanently relocate with his girlfriend.

The club made an emotional presentation to Marzec last week as an integral member of the team for the past few seasons, giving him a signed match ball from all the players and a small gift.

Marzec was sadly unable to play in the match last Wednesday night owing to a suspension but was introduced to the crowd and received a warm round of applause as one of the more popular members of the team.

A star in Tolgay

One of the young players making a big splash for Crescent Star this year has been 18-year-old striker Tolgay Ozbey. Five goals in nine league matches plus four goals in three cup games has seen the talented teenager rise to the surface in a League decked with talent.

A former Sydney United junior, Ozbey spent five seasons in the Sydney Olympic youth ranks before making his first grade debut for United in the National League season just completed.

"I thoroughly enjoyed my time at Sydney United, the players the coaching and training four to five nights per week," Ozbey said, "I went down to the club for a trial during the off-season and Grant Lee obviously liked what he saw and it went from there."

Ozbey trained the entire season with the first grade squad, a benchmark he saw as a key step into his evolution towards becoming a first grade player.

"When you're training with senior players five nights a week and being intensively coached and managed you sharpen your skills and fitness. I was playing as a striker which meant I was doing a lot of work on my shooting and my positional sense in and around the penalty box and that really helped my development."

With the National League going through its final rites in the month of February, Ozbey was actively recruited by current club Crescent Star, accepting a move in the days prior to the transfer window closing.

"My move to Crescent Star came at a good time and I have been really enjoying my time here. Yasin Ozdenak is excellent and he has helped my game enormously. The coaching staff, the committee, the fans, the whole club is just a great place to be and it shows in the way the team has been going."

With Crescent Star standing on the cusp of their first Premier League finals campaign, Ozbey will be a key member of their strike force, and in the absence of partner Orhan Dincer with a chronic shoulder injury he is confident he can rise to the occasion.

"Every game for us is a must-win. Our loss to Bankstown was difficult but because of the number of injuries and suspensions we were depleted and it showed. But over the next few weeks I am sure you will see the real Crescent Star stand up and give our fans something to cheer about."

Soccer goes mainstream

It is always good to see soccer getting an opportunity to promote itself in the mainstream media. In the Sydney Morning Herald's Saturday lift out '48 hours' there was a small write-up under the sport banner for the game between St George and Blacktown City last weekend.

One amongst the large crowd at the game was none other than former NSWSF and current Gold Coast Soccer President Peter Gray

World comes to winter

It is not often that we find a current international player running around in the Winter Super League competition but the Manly-Warringah Dolphins have one such name doing exactly that.

Brent Fisher was celebrating his call up to the New Zealand squad for the Oceania World Cup play-offs by scoring a goal in the Dolphins 2-1 win over Fairfield Bulls on Sunday.

Dolphin-speak

Speaking of Dolphins past and present, goalkeeper Paul Henderson has had his trial at English Premier League club Bolton Wanderers extended another two weeks after impressing the coaching staff there. And former striker Hamilton Thorp has just signed a deal with Swedish Second Division side IF Sylvia. He joins fellow Aussie Chay Hews who is also on the playing roster there.

Hawks' scoop

Stanmore Hawks have secured the services of former Sydney Olympic striker Pablo Cardozo for the remainder of the season. After being offered a contract with Malaysian club side Panang, Cardozo elected to return to Australia to link up with the Hawks.

New Cal stop wandering

Sadly the Hajduk Wanderers v New Caledonia match scheduled for Monday night has been cancelled.

NSW PREMIER LEAGUE TEAM OF THE WEEK

GOALKEEPER:

John Crawley (Blacktown City) – A handful of acrobatic saves kept his side well in the hunt against a substandard Saints side. He held his back four together well under significant pressure in the second-half

DEFENDERS:

Damien Foxe (Blacktown City) – Superb under pressure in the second-half as the Demons kept the Saints at bay, blanketing the influential Stuart Young

Saso Boskovski (Bankstown City) – Has not played a Premier League match since season 2000 but answered the call of coach Andy Papoulias midway through the year and returned to the fold. Never put a foot wrong in a sublime defensive display against Bonnyrigg

Sean Matthews (Central Coast) – Did a superb job marking the usually influential Jason Connolly in a tight game for the Coasties

Askin Oygur (Sydney Crescent Star) – Was his side's best player in a losing effort

MIDFIELDERS:

Joshua Maguire (Blacktown City) – The key man for the Demons in the midfield, his defensive duties on the normally influential Gabriel Mendez a real highlight

Steve Liavas (Bankstown City) – After a season coming off the bench, Liavas has finally been able to cement a starting spot having his most creative game of the year against Bonnyrigg

Peter Bennett (Penrith Panthers) – Toiled long and hard in the Panthers engine room

Harry James (Rockdale City Suns) – In the midst of a purple patch in form; scoring one goal and setting up a second for Denis Alilovic

STRIKERS:

Denis Alilovic (Rockdale City Suns) – Two goals and a lion hearted performance from Alilovic set up the win for his side

Matthew Borg (Bankstown City) – There is nothing more to say about 'Borgy' that hasn't already been written. He is now just one game away from the Golden Boot trophy after scoring the winner for his side in the last minute of an exciting contest against Bonnyrigg

COACH:

Andy Papoulias (Bankstown City) – Has the Lions once again standing on the edge of greatness after a couple of seasons in the footballing wilderness. Eight wins from the clubs last ten games has seen them roar into third spot and they look the favourites to take the all-important double-chance in the final series

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Hajduk wanders into top spot

The Hajduk Wanderers moved to outright first on the Winter Super League competition table with a solid 2-1 win over top five aspirants Macarthur Rams at Lynwood Park on Saturday night.

Though Macarthur were desperately unlucky not to score in the 2nd minute when Paul Wither had his close range shot tipped over the bar by Daniel Schwarzer, all the early momentum was with the visitors and they went 2-0 up inside of eleven minutes.

Tim Gledhill was the star of the show scoring from fast breaks which caught the home side napping. The Rams did put some strong pressure on Hajduk in the second-half with Male Vukosa finding the net after an excellent cross from Wither.

Gary Seymour blew an excellent chance in the 69th minute when Schwarzer pulled off an acrobatic save to deny him one-on-one. At the other end Rams goalkeeper Phil Zabaks had a strong match deny late efforts from Navid Varess and Brendan Salameh.

Sutherland Sharks and Fraser Park did battle at Seymour Shaw in what for the home side was a real six-pointer. Fortunately for the Sharks they put in one of their better performances of the season against a disappointing Fraser Park who were without the services of the injured Michael Kladis and Tanju Balabanel.

Dean Heffernan returned to bolster the Sharks midfield and his first-half performance was crucial for the Sharks, capped off by the game's first goal. Monte Pfrengle fed the ball through two defenders on the edge of the penalty area and Heffernan beat the advancing Jason Holmes to the ball to prod home.

Anthony Sarmonikas repeated the dose just past the half-hour when he managed to get goal side of his defender down the left leaving only the exposed Holmes to beat.

The Fraser Park defenders struggled to deal with the pace of the Sutherland attackers on occasions and the Sharks could have grabbed a third but for some desperate defending.

The visitor's best chance came in the shadows of half-time with firstly Liam Austin's deflected shot bobbling past Nathan Hughes' left-hand post. Fraser came close to getting an important goal from the ensuing corner with the ball spilt by Hughes in the swirling winds and under strong Fraser pressure, but fortunately Garth Moring was on hand to hook the ball off the line.

Both teams struggled to carve out chances in the second-half with the match disintegrating somewhat in the windy conditions. Fraser's exasperation at being able to get back in the game was typified when Andrew Mailer was sent-off late in the game after receiving an unnecessary second yellow card for kicking the ball away. The Dragons slipped to fourth with the loss while the Sharks move ominously to eighth, just two points behind fifth position.

Manly-Warringah coach Phil Moss described his sides 2-1 win over fellow contenders Fairfield Bulls as "his most satisfying for the season thus far."

The Dolphins scored first in the 16th minute when Brent Fisher put away a Mick Williams free kick at the back post and got their second from a Steve Berry penalty in the 53rd minute. A handball from Robert Sacco setting up the opportunity for Berry who beat Bulls goalkeeper Claudio Fernandez with the spot kick.

Without the services of key strikers Nenos Bobo and Leigh Gunn the Bulls battled hard and got one back late via Kory Babington but sadly it was too little too late for Hugh McCrory's side who now slide to seventh.

The League's new-found entertainers Stanmore Hawks put on an exhibition of goal scoring at Arlington Oval, beating local rivals Dulwich Hill with a scintillating second-half to move into third spot on the ladder.

With new signing Pablo Cardozo on song, the Hawks fought back strongly from 1-0 down to take full control of the match against a young Dulwich Hill outfit. Scott Baillie scored the equalizer in the 35th minute when he put away a loose ball in the penalty box after goalkeeper Michael Xuereb found his initial shot too hot to handle.

Sam Dawd scored the first of three for the afternoon when he put away a well-taken header from a Maurice Soler cross before he stepped up to the penalty spot for number two in the 68th minute after Baillie was bought down inside the penalty box.

Cardozo got into the act in the 78th minute when he sent in a beautiful cross from the left for Dawd to put away before Sam Awad got the Hawks fifth after a deft through-ball from Baillie. Dulwich Hill then got one back five minutes from time when the Hawks midfielders turned the ball over and Mark Ferreira put away the cross from the left-hand side.

The other big winners were the Minotaurs who accounted for Sydney University 4-2 at University Oval. Dimitri Zakilas grabbed three goals to make his tally to seven for the season as the Minotaurs moved to within a game of the top five.

Zakilas got the scoreboard moving early when he put away a header from a Marino Musumeci corner in the 5th minute, but the students came storming back to take the lead 2-1 at the break. Andy Christie nailed a long distance shot in the 16th minute before Tim Wilson put away a lovely pass from Christie 13 minutes later.

Reshuffling his line-up to include Manual Sarakikas at half-time the Minotaurs responded cutting loose in the second-half to score three goals and win going away. New signing from Parramatta Power Dominic Hudat scored a solo effort in the 70th minute before Zakilas nailed two more, the second a class finish from a Carlos Musumeci short cross.

'The General' was exceptionally happy with the performance of his players, singling out Hudat, Zakilas and evergreen Sam Panagakis for special praise.

In the other two matches Ryde City moved off the bottom of the table with a 2-1 win over Hurstville ZSC. Greg Fuchs scored a brace for the Gunners while Robert Babaic replied for the visitors.

Northern Tigers secured just their second win of the season defeating MSC Liverpool 2-1 at Parklands Oval. Down 1-0 at half-time to an Eric Williams goal, the Tigers finished out the match strongly with Anthony Oppedisano and Erik Paatalu the goal scorers.

Winter Super League Goalscorers
Sunday 2nd May

7 Tanju Balabanel (FP), Tim Gledhill (HWU), Demetri Zakilas (HCM)
6 Nenos Bobo (FB), Male Vukosa (MR)
5 Eddie Adam (HZSC), Sargun Dawd (SH)
4 Richard Hamson (MR), Iain MacDonald (SS), Paul Wither (MR), Tallan Martin (DH), Brent Fisher (MWD), Eric Williams (MSC), Scott Baillie (SH)
3 Michael Williams (MWD), Rob Smithies (SU), Johnny Ghisso (FB),), Tom Mikulski (NT), Marino Musemici (HCM), Spyro Kladis (FP), Dean Heffernan (SS), Robert Babaic (HZSC), Greg Fuchs (RC)
2 Navid Varess (HWU), Matt Hunter (NT), Zia Younan (FP), Maurice Soler (SH), Chris Hunt (SS), John Chavez (DH), Damien Pisano (RC), Ben Realph (MSC), Peter Satos (SU), Gary Seymour (MR), Leigh Gunn (FB), Ante Jusic (HZSC), Manuel Sarikakis (HCM), Claudio Oricchio (MSC), Neil Philippou (SH), Anthony Oppedisano (NT), Anthony Sermonikas (SS), Sam Awad (SH), Steve Berry (MWD), Mark Ferreira (DH)
1 Ben Evans (MR), Gary Seymour (MR), Jason Mesiti (NT), Joe Simic (HZSC), Rob Portelli (MWD), Mohammad Mansaray (DH), Brendan Mitrovich (FB), Steve Bavesa (RC), Adam Wither (MR), Danny Georges (MSC), Jason Lal (DH), Javier Mancino (FB), Oliver Skelding (RC), Andrew Mailer (FP), David O'Han (FP), Chris Demetriou (HCM), Joe Vrkic (HZSC), Daniel Jurleta (HZSC), Modar Sultan (HCM), Adam Mammoliti (SS), Glen Sprod (FP), Tuan Cao (HWU), David James Z(SH), Dominic Rossi (MSC), Peter Peralta (SU), Erik Paatalu (Northern Tigers), D Hudap (HCM), Andy

WINTER SUPER LEAGUE: ROUND 9:

FIRST GRADE: Macarthur Rams 1 (N Vukosa 54m) Hajduk Wanderers United 2 (T Gledhill 5/11m), Dulwich Hill 2 (S Cole 11m M Ferreira 85m) Stanmore Hawks 5 (S Baillie 35m S Dawd 41/68/78m S Awad 81m), Northern Tigers 2 (A Oppedisano 46m E Paartalu 55m) MSC Liverpool 1 (E Williams 20m), Sydney University 2 (A Christie 16m T Wilson 29m) Hurstville City Minotaurs 4 (D Zakilas 5/75/87m D Hudap 70m), Ryde City 2 (G Fuchs x 2) Hurstville ZSC 1 (R Babaic), Fairfield Bulls 1 (K Babington 89m) Manly Warringah Dolphins 2 (B Fisher 16m S Berry 53m), Fraser Park Dragons 0 Sutherland Shire Sharks 2 (D Heffernan 17m A Sarmonikas 32m).

GRADE 20: Macarthur Rams 1 Hajduk Wanderers United 2, Dulwich Hill 3 Stanmore Hawks 0, Northern Tigers 5 MSC Liverpool 1, Sydney University 0 Hurstville City Minotaurs 1, Ryde City 2 Hurstville ZSC 1, Fairfield Bulls 3 Manly Warringah Dolphins 6, Fraser Park Dragons 3 Sutherland Shire Sharks 0.

STATE LEAGUE DIVISION ONE: RD 10:

FIRST GRADE: Nepean Association 2 (Own Goal 7m A Jennings 45m) Mt Pritchard 1 (M Severino 10m), Western Rage 2 (G Wakim P Pyllotis) Fairfield City Lions 3 (A Cetinay H Orhan x 2), Hills United 4 (J Miller 44m pen/87m T Bardsley 60m M McCrory 75m) Camden Tigers 0, Schofields Scorpions 1 (A Murselovic 26m) Belmore Hercules 1 (J Manolopoulos 50m pen), Wollongong United 2 (A Jomaa 25/81m) Liverpool Bossy 0, Mt Druitt Town Rangers 1 (B Clarke 20m) Bathurst 75 1 (S West 61m), The Wanderers 0 White City 3 (A Asanovic 49/66m M Savic 85m).

GRADE 20: Nepean Association 3 Mt Pritchard 1, Western Rage 4 Fairfield City Lions 0, Hills United 5 Camden Tigers 0, Schofields Scorpions 0 Belmore Hercules 0, Wollongong United 2 Liverpool Bossy 5, Mt Druitt Town Rangers 3 Bathurst 75 0, The Wanderers 2 White City 3.

STATE LEAGUE DIVISION TWO: RD 6:

FIRST GRADE: UNSW 1 (N Kodomichalos 33m penalty) Auburn Stars 4 (S Jordan 47/75/85m E Topal 65m), Greenisland SC 1 (O Lazarevic 66m) Blacktown Districts 3 (S Falanga 26/53m V Timpano 72m), Southern Star Sharks 0 Greystanes SC 1 (B Racker 10m), Prospect United 0 Hakoah 3 (J Pillemer 4/86m pen S Platkov 58m), Inter Lions 0 Springwood SC 2 (J Chapman 19m C Johnson 44m pen).

GRADE 21: UNSW 14 Auburn Stars 0, Greenisland SC 2 Blacktown Districts 1, Southern Star Sharks 2 Greystanes SC 2, Prospect United 1 Hakoah 2, Inter Lions 0 Springwood SC 3.

GRADE 19: UNSW 9 Auburn Stars 0, Greenisland SC 4 Blacktown Districts 1, Southern Star Sharks 1 Greystanes SC 0, Prospect United 1 Hakoah 4, Inter Lions 4 Springwood SC 0.

STATE LEAGUE DIVISION THREE: RD 6:

FIRST GRADE: Sporting SCC 1 Trasandinos 3, Colo Colo 4 Balmain SC 2, Gladesville United 1 Gazy Lansvale 1, Earlwood Wanderers 3 Roosters FC 3, Sydney Cedars SC 3 East Coast Magic 4.

RESERVE GRADE: Kellyville Kolts 5 Lithgow Workmen 0, Sporting SCC 1 Trasandinos 4, Colo Colo 1 Balmain SC 5, Gladesville United 7 Gazy Lansvale 2, Earlwood Wanderers 3 Rooster FC 2, Sydney Cedars SC 1 East Coast Magic 1.

ARRIVE ALIVE NSW WOMENS SUPER LEAGUE - ROUND 6:

FIRST GRADE: Bathurst City Panthers 1 (L Armstrong 22m) Macarthur Rams 3 (L Khamis 13/67m T Rockall 36m), Nepean Association 0 North West Sydney Koalas 4 (J Burgess 49/70m L Carr 76m J Munn 85m), Wollongong Wolves 0 Sutherland Association 0, Manly Warringah Dolphins 1 (E Howes 25m) Marconi 7 (L Gilbert 49/63/87m K Rohrer 54m A Cavanagh 59/65m L Warrener 76m), UNSW 1 (A Smith 85m) NSW Academy 4 (J Bazi 84m Y Uzunlar 23/25/51m).

GRADE 21: Bathurst City Panthers 1 Macarthur Rams 0, Nepean Association 3 North West Sydney Koalas 2, Wollongong Wolves 0 Sutherland Association 1, Manly Warringah Dolphins 1 Marconi 2, UNSW 0 NSW Academy 7.

ARRIVE ALIVE NSW WOMENS STATE LEAGUE - ROUND 6:

FIRST GRADE: Southern Branch 4 (T Pyers 45m S Smith 31m K French 49/63m) Blacktown Districts 1 (M Kast 2m). Gladesville Ravens 5 (M Corderoy 10/17m S Barroso 7m K Allen 80m N Bohm 88m) Roselands Raptors 0, Hawkesbury City 0 Sydney University 3 (P Kelly 17m C Debenham 29m R Lucas 82m), Granville Rage 1 (A Hulme 47m) Central Coast FC 2 (V Dashwood 59m G McMinimee 62m).

GRADE 21: Southern Branch 0 Blacktown Districts 8. Gladesville Ravens 2 Roselands Raptors 7, Hawkesbury City 0 Sydney University 3, Granville Rage 2 Central Coast FC 4.

PREMIER YOUTH LEAGUE: ROUND 10:

GRADE 13: Macarthur Rams 0 Hajduk Wanderers United 3, A.P.I.A. Leichhardt Tigers 0 Newcastle United 0, Sutherland Shire 0 Marconi Stallions 2, Gladesville Spirit SC 1 Sydney United 5, Blacktown City Demons 0 Parramatta Eagles 1, Sydney Olympic 3 Central Coast FC 0, Bankstown City Cubs 1 Wollongong Wolves 0.

GRADE 14: Macarthur Rams 1 Hajduk Wanderers United 4, A.P.I.A. Leichhardt Tigers 0 Newcastle United 3, Sutherland Shire 0 Marconi Stallions 2, Gladesville Spirit SC 1 Sydney United 0, Blacktown City Demons 1 Parramatta Eagles 0, Sydney Olympic 6 Central Coast FC 0, Bankstown City Cubs 0 Wollongong Wolves 3.

GRADE 15: Macarthur Rams 1 Hajduk Wanderers United 1, A.P.I.A. Leichhardt Tigers 1 Newcastle United 1, Sutherland Shire 1 Marconi Stallions 2, Gladesville Spirit SC 3 Sydney United 2, Blacktown City Demons 1 Parramatta Eagles 1, Sydney Olympic 2 Central Coast FC 2, Bankstown City Cubs 0 Wollongong Wolves 0.

GRADE 16: Macarthur Rams 3 Hajduk Wanderers United 1, A.P.I.A. Leichhardt Tigers 1 Newcastle United 0, Sutherland Shire 0 Marconi Stallions 1, Gladesville Spirit SC 2 Sydney United 1, Blacktown City Demons 1 Parramatta Eagles 0, Sydney Olympic 3 Central Coast FC 0, Bankstown City Cubs 0 Wollongong Wolves 1.

GRADE 18: Macarthur Rams 2 Hajduk Wanderers United 4, A.P.I.A. Leichhardt Tigers 3 Newcastle United 1, Sutherland Shire 0 Marconi Stallions 0, Gladesville Spirit SC 1 Sydney United 0, Blacktown City Demons 0 Parramatta Eagles 1, Sydney Olympic 5 Central Coast FC 3, Bankstown City Cubs 2 Wollongong Wolves 0.

RESCHEDULED GAME: ROUND 6:

GRADE 18: Gladesville Spirit SC 3 Wollongong Wolves 2.

SUPER YOUTH LEAGUE: ROUND 8:

GRADE 13: Schofields Scorpions 4 Fairfield Bulls 0, Granville Rage 1 Bonnyrigg White Eagles 1, Southern Branch 4 Fraser Park-Canterbury 2, Manly Warringah Dolphins 3 St George 0, Penrith Nepean United 1 Parramatta Star 1, Hills United 1 Northern Tigers 2.

GRADE 14: Schofields Scorpions 2 Fairfield Bulls 0, Granville Rage 2 Bonnyrigg White Eagles 0, Southern Branch 1 Fraser Park-Canterbury 1, Manly Warringah Dolphins 2 St George 1, Penrith Nepean United 4 Parramatta Star 1, Hills United 2 Northern Tigers 3.

GRADE 15: Schofields Scorpions 2 Fairfield Bulls 0, Granville Rage 1 Bonnyrigg White Eagles 2, Southern Branch 2 Fraser Park-Canterbury 1, Manly Warringah Dolphins 0 St George 4, Penrith Nepean United 5 Parramatta Star 2, Hills United 1 Northern Tigers 1.

GRADE 16: Schofields Scorpions 0 Fairfield Bulls 2, Granville Rage 1 Bonnyrigg White Eagles 2, Southern Branch 3 Fraser Park-Canterbury 0, Manly Warringah Dolphins 0 St George 2, Penrith Nepean United 2 Parramatta Star 2, Hills United 1 Northern Tigers 1.

GRADE 18: Schofields Scorpions 2 Fairfield Bulls 2, Granville Rage 1 Bonnyrigg White Eagles 4, Southern Branch 1 Fraser Park-Canterbury 1, Manly Warringah Dolphins 1 St George 1, Penrith Nepean United 1 Parramatta Star 3, Hills United 3 Northern Tigers 2.

DIVISION ONE YOUTH LEAGUE: RD 8:

GRADE 13: Stanmore Hawks 3 Bathurst 75 Western 6, Belmore Hercules 3 Dulwich Hill 2, Wollongong United 4 Sydney Uni Eastern Lions 0, Hurstville City Minotaurs 0 Rockdale City Suns 2, Ryde City 2 Mt Druitt Town Rangers 1.

GRADE 14: Stanmore Hawks 0 Bathurst 75 Western 3, Belmore Hercules 5 Dulwich Hill 0, Wollongong United 0 Sydney Uni Eastern Lions 3, Hurstville City Minotaurs 1 Rockdale City Suns 0, Ryde City 0 Mt Druitt Town Rangers 0.

GRADE 15: Stanmore Hawks 0 Bathurst 75 Western 4, Belmore Hercules 0 Dulwich Hill 0, Wollongong United 3 Sydney Uni Eastern Lions 2, Hurstville City Minotaurs 1 Rockdale City Suns 0, Ryde City 3 Mt Druitt Town Rangers 1.

GRADE 16: Stanmore Hawks 2 Bathurst 75 Western 2, Belmore Hercules 0 Dulwich Hill 3, Wollongong United 4 Sydney Uni Eastern Lions 1, Hurstville City Minotaurs 1 Rockdale City Suns 1, Ryde City 0 Mt Druitt Town Rangers 1.

GRADE 18: Stanmore Hawks 1 Bathurst 75 Western 2, Belmore Hercules 2 Dulwich Hill 10, Wollongong United 0 Sydney Uni Eastern Lions 6, Hurstville City Minotaurs 2 Rockdale City Suns 1, Ryde City 1 Mt Druitt Town Rangers 2.

***S.S.I.* GIRLS YOUTH LEAGUE: RESCHEDULED GAME: ROUND 14**

GRADE 12: Marconi 5 Southern Branch 1.
GRADE 14: Marconi 0 Southern Branch 3.
GRADE 16: Marconi 0 Southern Branch 2.

S.S.I. GIRLS YOUTH LEAGUE - ROUND 8:

GRADE 12: Nepean Association 2 Blacktown Districts 2, North West Sydney Koalas 4 Macarthur Rams 0, Manly Warringah Dolphins 1 Sutherland Association 0, Wollongong Wolves 0 St George Association 2, Southern Branch 1 Central Coast FC 3, UNSW 1 Northern Tigers 0.

GRADE 14: Nepean Association 4 Blacktown Districts 0, North West Sydney Koalas 3 Macarthur Rams 2, Manly Warringah Dolphins 0 Sutherland Association 0, Wollongong Wolves 0 St George Assocation 6, Southern Branch 2 Central Coast FC 2, UNSW 0 Northern Tigers 1.

GRADE 16: Nepean Association 2 Blacktown Districts 0, North West Sydney Koalas 2 Macarthur Rams 2, Manly Warringah Dolphins 1 Sutherland Association 1, Wollongong Wolves 2 St George Association 1, Southern Branch 5 Central Coast FC 0, UNSW 0 Northern Tigers 2.

attack UNDER 11 METROPOLITAN LEAGUE - ROUND 4:

GRADE 11: Gladesville Hornsby Association 2 Canterbury Association 2, Ku-Ring-Gai Association 1 Nepean Association 2, Manly Warringah Association 3 Eastern Suburbs Association 0, Granville Association 4 Central Coast Association 0, Sutherland Association 2 Bankstown Association 0, Macarthur Association 0 Blacktown Association 4, St George Association 1 Illawarra Association 3, Southern Districts 4 Southern Branch 1.

GRADE 12: Gladesville Hornsby Association 4 Canterbury Association 0, Ku-Ring-Gai Association 2 Nepean Association 1, Manly Warringah Association 3 Eastern Suburbs Association 3, Granville Association 1 Central Coast Association 3, Sutherland Association 1 Bankstown Association 1, Macarthur Association 1 Blacktown Association 3, St George Association 1 Illawarra Association 0, Southern Districts 1 Southern Branch 0.

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Continental
TYRES - ENGINEERED IN GERMANY

Three minute death for Tigers

By Paul Goodwin

A.P.I.A. LEICHHARDT 0
BONNYRIGG 3

Two goals in the first three minutes virtually put an end to A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt's hopes of annexing the inaugural Continental Tyres Cup when they met Bonnyrigg White Eagles at Lambert Park on Wednesday night.

In what amounted to their first move forward in the game Bonnyrigg exposed the sluggish A.P.I.A. defence through the work of Jim Aschner and Aaron Burgess.

Aschner exchanged passes with his strike partner, Burgess, before getting to the left by-line in rapid strides.

His pinpoint cross to the centre was met clinically by Burgess whose firm header beat Stewart Vella with ease.

It had simply been too fast a start to the game for the home defence to deal with, but there was soon more to come.

Before they could recover their opponents had posted a second goal inside three minutes. Aschner, again, a man who had looked a shadow of his normal self at the weekend fashioned another opening, this time for wide defender Devrim Huseyin who made rapid progress down the right to latch onto a diagonal through-pass.

Huseyin did not hesitate and crisply despatched his low shot - from 15-yards out - past the diving Vella to send the supporters of the visiting team into raptures.

Bonnyrigg continued to stretch A.P.I.A. and almost got a third goal in just the seventh minute but hard working midfielder, Brad Groves, steered his chance into the side netting after Vuko Tomasevic had played the ball in from the right and the defence had struggled to clear their lines.

Bonnyrigg added a third goal midway through the second half.

Aschner fed a nice through-ball for Burgess to run onto on the right and then tuck past Vella with a very accomplished finish in the 63rd.

It was a very disappointing effort by A.P.I.A. whose season has really bottomed out now and only hopes lay with success in this remaining tournament

One short, but Star full of passion

By Costa Niente

BLACKTOWN CITY 2
SYDNEY CRESCENT 4

Pulsating, dramatic and controversial – the Continental Tyres Cup semi final between Blacktown City Demons and Sydney Crescent Star had all of these qualities and so much more.

Six superb goals, a see-sawing scoreline, a red card and a courageous victory by the team left with 10 players. Forget the romance of cup football, this was raw and outrageously good football entertainment.

It came as no surprise when Hakan Sevgin opened the scoring for Crescent Star after 12 minutes, finding a way past Blacktown keeper John Crawley who had already made several top-class saves.

Yet Blacktown responded immediately, Luke Roodenburg pouncing within a minute. For a time the Demons asserted themselves on the match, before Sevgin restored Crescent Star's advantage in the 36th minute.

The match exploded in the 53rd minute, thanks to a little adventure that went pear-shaped for Blacktown keeper John Crawley.

A "professional" foul by Crawley's misdemeanour enraged Crescent Star's Joe Bruni, who lashed out at the by now retreating Blacktown keeper.

Referee Greg Leverton had no choice but to red card Bruni, while Crawley escaped with a yellow and a red blushes from his misadventure.

Imagine Crescent Star's feeling of injustice when Adam Kwasnik equalised a minute later.

Extra time was looming when an intricate piece of play earned Crescent Star a set piece. Angelo Petratos, a tower of strength in the heart of defence for Crescent Star, ventured forward.

Blacktown's marking was just a little loose, symptomatic of a team wondering why they hadn't put the result beyond doubt. Enough for Petratos to find the space and time to put his header past Crawley.

A solo breakaway through the near-vacant Blacktown defence was finished with a flourish by Tolgay Ozbey. It was a famous 4-2 victory.

Arrive alive NSW WOMENS SUPER LEAGUE

By Aimee Brown

Winter reminded us it is on it's way this weekend, with cold temperatures and windy conditions affecting all games in round 6 of the Arrive alive NSW Womens Super League.

The Manly Warringah Dolphins hosted the Marconi Stallions at Cromer Park and suffered a substantial 7-1 loss. The cold and the wind posed a challenge to both teams, but the Dolphins were hit the hardest.

The Dolphins kept pushing forward, and had some good opportunities. In the 25th minute Emma Howes scored from outside the penalty area, placing her shot over a crowded box into the top left corner of the goal. This gave encouragement to the Dolphins, and they kept the pressure on until the half time whistle.

Four minutes into the second half, Marconi's Lisa Gilbert scored a goal almost identical to Howes' opening goal, over the tops of players' heads and out of the reach of the Dolphins' keeper, Niki Pichon. This was just the first of many to come as Marconi relentlessly pushed forward.

Kristy Rohrer scored Marconi's second in the 54th minute by skilfully playing the ball from down near the left hand goal line across into the right of the goal.

The Stallions next goal was to come from Alicia Cavanagh in the 59th minute, who, after a cross from Lisa Gilbert, tucked the ball into the left side of the goal.

Four minutes after, Lisa Gilbert scored another goal for Marconi, slotting the ball along the ground from the left side into the right side of the goal. The Stallions kept up their punishing attack, and Alicia Cavanagh scored her second goal, tapping the ball over the line in the midst of a busy 18-yard box.

In the 76th minute, Marconi scored again when captain Lisa Warrener nodded in a header off a corner. Marconi's final goal and the third of the game for Lisa Gilbert, was the result of a shot high from the right into the left side of the goal.

The Macarthur Rams travelled out to Bathurst to play the Bathurst City Panthers, and came home with a 3-1 win. The Rams felt the pressure of the extremely cold conditions, but managed to put two goals away before the second half courtesy of young Matilda leena Khamis and caption Taryn Rockall. The Panthers also had some good chances, and scored one before half time following a mix-up in the Rams box. After the break the Rams came back stronger and extended their lead when Khamis netted her second in the 67th minute. The Panthers continued to fight and challenged the Rams until the end.

In Wollongong, Sutherland Association drew nil-all with the Wollongong Wolves. Conditions were very windy and this affected the standard of the play. Despite this challenge it was a good game, and both teams held possession of the ball well. Wolves keeper Dimitri Poulos made some fantastic saves, keeping the scores down. Both teams walking away with a point a-piece.

The North West Sydney Koalas, travelled out to Cook Park and defeated the Nepean Association 4-0 which maintains their position at the top of the table.

Nepean challenged the Koalas well in the first half, but after the break the Koalas pulled together and came back strong. Jo Burgess, scored the first goal for the Koalas in the 49th minute and this set the wheels in motion for the remainder of the match.

Burgess added to her tally at the 70th minute followed shortly by a goal from Leonore Carr and Joanne Munn added the Koalas fourth five minutes before time.

The NSW Academy played UNSW at the Dave Philips field and secured a 4-1 win.

UNSW's defence was strong, and held the Academy until the 23rd minute when Servet Uzunlar managed to break the deadlock. Uzunlar added her second shortly afterwards following a cross from the right, giving the academy a two goal lead at half-time.

Uzunlar completed her hat-trick shortly the break with a well-placed shot past UNSW goalkeeper, Ruth Jago.

But UNSW never eased off, holding Academy back until the 84th minute when Julia Bazi headed home at the far post from a corner. UNSW did register a consolation goal shortly before time when Alex Smith chipped Yasmin Favretti from outside the box, bringing the final score to 4-1.

Saints fall on Eagles' sword

(from page 19)

A brilliant run from Ante Deur set up Christian Cevenini who knocked in a superb cross from the by-line which found Beddoni in a sea of defenders. But in a tight second-half, the veteran striker was well contained and unable to initiate a comeback.

While the loss leaves the door open for Belconnen to dislodge St George and mount a late challenge for the Minor-Premiership, the three points allows Trevor Morgan to breathe a huge sigh of relief.

Having struggled through a mid-season slump with his side in which they didn't win a game for eight weeks, they have now won three of their last four starts to guarantee themselves a spot in next season's competition.

PARRAMATTA EAGLES 2
(I Arrarte 47' N Rivera 53')
ST GEORGE SAINTS 1
(B Beddoni 39')
at Melita Stadium, South Granville

PARRAMATTA EAGLES: Peter Munsie, Ismael Arrarte, Mark Reveley, Daniel Borg, Matthew Clowes, Andy Kane (Rod Hutchinson), Anthony Mittiga, Nathan Rivera, Ben Delicata, John Kelao, Paul Down
Coach: Trevor Morgan.
ST. GEORGE SAINTS: Richard Patrizi, Simon Verrender (Max Sevares), Mirko Jurilj, Vince Savoca, Adrian Webster, Raphael Bove (Dean Culina), Gabriel Mendez, Ante Deur, Christian Cevenini, Bruno Beddoni, Stuart Young
Coach: Manny Spanoudakis.

Referee: Con Dionis
Assistant Referees: Jim Nicolaou and Steve McAuley
Fourth Official: David Finlay

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